

REV. S. J. HUNTER, D.D.

MEMORIAL
SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

BY THE LATE

REV. S. J. HUNTER, D.D.

WITH A BRIEF MEMOIR

BY THE

REV. W. J. HUNTER, D.D.

"HE BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH."

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is commonly assumed that every new book must give some good reason for pressing itself upon the attention of the public. Any book adapted to instruct, inspire and console needs no apology. John Milton says: "A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." It is always, however, a delicate, if not a doubtful thing, to publish literary or theological remains which were not intended by their author for publication, and which have not, therefore, been prepared for the press by the one who was most competent, and who had the right to decide in such a matter.

While giving all due weight to these considerations, it has been thought by friends of the late Dr. S. J. Hunter, that, for several reasons, the publication of a volume of his sermons was justifiable and desirable. It will gratify many in the congregations to which he preached during his life, to have the opportunity of reading these discourses. Many others who never had the privilege of knowing or hearing the preacher, may have a wish to read some of his sermons.

The volume will also be a not inappropriate memorial of "one whom God has taken," and will contribute, in some degree, to keep his memory green in the hearts of those who knew and loved him. But, above all, it may be confidently hoped that the great lessons of Christian truth which are expounded and enforced in these sermons will strengthen the faith and quicken the zeal of those who read them.

The lecture on our Hymn Book contains so much that is interesting, in the way of biography and illustration, that it was thought advisable to give it a place in the volume. But in order to confine the work within the limits agreed upon, it was found necessary to omit some of the biographical notes and incidents. Most of these Dr. Hunter was in the habit of omitting when he delivered the lecture.

Dr. Hunter was held in high estimation as a preacher in all the churches of which he was pastor. It is, therefore, an instructive fact, which every reader can see for himself, that his popularity and success as a preacher were not owing to any questionable departure from the simplicity of the Gospel. His chief excellence as a preacher consisted in the clearness of mental grasp, the fitness and force of language, and the directness and fidelity with which he presented the great central truths of the Bible, which relate to Christian experience and life. It is a grave mistake for any preacher to think that anything can be more attractive or effective, in preaching to suffering, sinful men and

women, than the faithful, pointed preaching of the practical verities of the Gospel of Christ.

There is a prevalent opinion among a certain class of writers, that the press has superseded the teaching of the pulpit. This assumption, which is not held by earnest Christians of any Church, is not justified by the facts. I have no disposition to minify or disparage the influence of the press. It now deals with many subjects which were in former times regarded as in the province of the clergy. It has a powerful influence in the formation of public opinion on moral and religious, as well as on social and political questions. The Churches have not yet fully waked up to the great importance of using the press as a means of diffusing the knowledge of the truth.

But the press can never supersede the preaching of the Gospel. The testimony borne in preaching, to the truth and power of the Christian religion, is a divinely ordained means of leading the guilty and erring children of men to a saving knowledge of Christ. If the press has not superseded the living voice in political and other non-religious contests, it is still less likely to do so in regard to the propagation of religion, in which testimony respecting the personal experience of salvation bears so prominent a part. What Scripture and reason would lead us to expect is verified by the actual facts that are transpiring around us. The message of the Christian pulpit never had so vast an audience, and never exercised so mighty an influence for good as in our own times.

So long as guilty sinners are longing for deliverance from the burden of their sins, the dark and ignorant groping for light and truth, the enslaved groaning for spiritual emancipation, and the feeble and fainting crying out for a strength that none but God can supply, the message of life in which God proclaims His redeeming grace, spoken by those whose own hearts have felt its power, shall continue to be the mightiest means of bringing sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

E. HARTLEY DEWART.

TORONTO, *December 4, 1890.*



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In Memoriam.

REV. S. J. HUNTER, D.D.

ON the 12th of April, 1843, in the beautiful little town of Philipsburg, in the Province of Quebec, my dear brother, Samuel James, first saw the light. I was then just eight years of age, and until this day I have the most vivid recollection of my first sight of the new "baby brother." Clad in his long white dress, mother held him up while the rest of the children clustered around her bedside, and she said, "Thank the Lord for a young son." She never had occasion to take back that thanksgiving, for, during all her life, Samuel never gave her one pang of sorrow, but many a ray of sunshine came into her heart as she watched his development from infancy to manhood, and noted with proud satisfaction the rare talents which gradually unfolded with the passing years. The family history reveals a Scottish ancestry, in direct line from the heroic and godly Covenanters, but our parents were born and married in the county Tyrone, Ireland. Immediately after their marriage, they set sail for America, and settled at Ottawa, the capital of the Dominion, then known as By-Town, where they remained for a few years, when they

removed to Philipsburg. At this time they were adherents of the Presbyterian Church, but during the progress of an old-fashioned Methodist "protracted meeting," father was induced to attend, and was soon convinced of sin, and, after some days and nights of deep distress, was brought into "the glorious liberty of the children of God." He immediately united with the Methodist Church, of which he remained a consistent and useful member until, in the eighty-second year of his age, the Master called him from labor to reward. He was a local preacher for more than fifty years. Mother retained her connection with the Presbyterian Church for many years before she, too, cast in her lot with Methodism, and thus it was that the children attended the Presbyterian Sunday-school in the morning and the Methodist in the afternoon, and grew up with a "warm side" for Presbyterianism.

While Samuel was yet a babe, the family removed to Ontario, and soon afterward settled in East Gwillimbury, which was then almost a wilderness. A farmer's life in those days involved hard work, and it soon became apparent that Samuel had no taste for such an occupation. In his studies he found delight, and, when a mere lad, had reached the limits of a common school teacher's power to instruct, and had taken a first-class certificate in the curriculum prescribed for public school teachers. The *Christian Guardian* and the secular weekly papers came regularly to the home, and were devoured with avidity. The few books in scanty libraries in the neighborhood were borrowed and read over and over again, and well do I remember how

my temper, as an older brother, was often tried when, having sent him into a field to harrow or plough, I would presently see the horses standing quietly by the fence, while the young teamster was lying under a shade-tree, poring over his books. *He was not made for a farmer.* The first money he ever earned was invested in three works which opened to him the vast world of thought, namely, Dick's Works, Rollin's Ancient History, and a Latin grammar and reader combined. In the meantime, the writer of these lines had entered the work of the Christian ministry, and, after his ordination and marriage, was comfortably settled at the charming little village of Burlington, near Hamilton. Samuel was now about seventeen years of age, and had recently experienced a change of heart, and connected himself with the Methodist Church, and was placed on the "plan," first as an exhorter, and then as a local preacher. About this time he secured a situation as clerk in a store and post-office in Burlington, and found a home in our little parsonage. I was surprised and delighted at his wonderful gift in prayer, and which he frequently exercised in our week-night services, and I was not long in discovering that he had no more taste for the store and post-office than for the farm. God's seal was on his heart, and He was waiting to put His crown upon his brow; and when the late Rev. Richard Jones, then Chairman of the Hamilton District, told me one day that he was looking out for a young man as an assistant to the Rev. John N. Lake, of the Hullsville Circuit, I ventured to suggest that perhaps my brother would do, if not too

young, for he was not yet eighteen years of age, and boyish-looking at that.

After some conversation, embracing trepidation on his part and persuasion and encouragement on my part, Samuel consented to go. The next day we went out in search of a horse. I made him a present of my saddle and "saddle-bags," no longer of use to me, and, with a few books in his trunk, we set out for his first circuit. I take the liberty of transcribing here the pen-picture of the boy preacher, and the beautiful tribute to his memory, given by Mr. Lake, in the columns of the *Guardian*, and dated May 5th, 1888:

"On a bright afternoon, early in October, 1861, a young man on a little French pony was jogging along on the old plank road leading from Hamilton to Port Dover, on his way to the little white parsonage in the village of Hullsville, occupied by the 'preacher in charge' of the Methodist congregations on the large and laborious field included in the 'Hullsville Circuit.' Hitching 'Tack-on' to the fence, he entered the cosy cottage and announced himself as Samuel J. Hunter, the 'supply' sent by the Chairman of the District, Rev. Richard Jones. Above the medium height, and below the medium weight, with a manly face bespeaking reserve and earnestness, with a laugh that always cheered, he was taken into the heart and home of the pastor at once, and welcomed to the greatest work that mortal man could be engaged in. Questioned as to his experience as a preacher, he said, 'I have only one sermon, and that is not much of a one.' But sermon or no sermon, the young preacher captured the hearts

of the people, and wherever he went they came to hear him, with the greatest pleasure, satisfaction and profit. 'Tack-on' carried him through mud, rain and snow, and he filled all his appointments, and his youthful Superintendent at the District Meeting not only answered with emphasis, the question, 'Has he competent abilities for our itinerant work?' but went on to state the gladness with which the people heard the truth from the lips of the stripling preacher. At the Conference of 1862 we were both removed—he to Oakville, and I to Markham. We met but seldom, but his name throughout that field of labor is still with many, 'as ointment poured forth.' In 1864 he came to Richmond Hill, and our circuits adjoined. We often met—especially do I remember the 'four days' meeting (lasting for fourteen days, and at which seventy souls were converted) held in Markham village, when he, with many others, came to my assistance. How intense his earnestness, how powerful his appeals, how clearly he presented truth. The stripling of former years, though no stouter in body, had acquired great breadth and scope of thought, and his hearers were always profited by his utterances. Years passed on, and each in his way endeavored to do his work as God gave ability. In 1870 the writer was laying down the responsibilities of the active ministry for the second time, on account of failing health, having spent the year at Niagara, when on a lovely morning in the latter end of June, in that year, a carriage stopped before the parsonage, and out stepped the subject of this sketch, beaming with health and

happiness, and following him came his blushing bride, to spend part of their honeymoon with us. The days went quickly by, full of pleasure and joy to the whole party. On the following Sabbath he preached, morning and evening, at the re-opening of the church, then just refitted and occupied by our congregation. The people were more than pleased with his sermons, and I could not help but notice the rapid strides he was making towards the front rank of public speakers. After those days of pleasure came a separation of three years, when I had the great pleasure of moving the resolution inviting him to Elm Street Church, Toronto, only one person on the Board beside myself knew anything of him, and he was accepted largely on my recommendation. But older men wanted the position, and only after a hard-fought battle, in which the writer took an active part, at the Conference, was the wish of the Quarterly Official Board carried out. Not that the committee doubted his ability for the position, but because older men had to be provided for. Twelve years in this city gave him an opportunity to prove his call to the Christian ministry, in the forceful sermons, the faithful pastoral visits, the efficient leader of special services, and the Christian gentleman. But he has taken his departure. We mourn his loss, and renew our vows of faithfulness to God and humanity. The influence of his life remains; the grave has received any error, covered any defect, and the fondest recollections alone survive."

Speaking of that first District Meeting, Mr. Lake

will remember an amusing episode. The late Rev. Dr. Rice was now Chairman of the District, and he had all the tenderness of a woman, with all the firmness of a general on the field of battle. In those days, candidates for the ministry were required to preach a trial sermon before the members of the district meeting, or a committee appointed to hear and report upon the sermon. We had several candidates that year, and Dr. Rice arranged for the trial sermons in the different churches of the city of Hamilton, where the district meeting was held. The old McNab Street Church was the prominent church of the city, and S. J. Hunter was announced to preach there on the evening of the first day of the meeting. The hour came, and so did the congregation, filling the lecture room to the doors, but the preacher did not come. The lad was frightened at the thought of standing before such an audience, and waited outside until the preliminary services were over, and Dr. Rice had put another man into the pulpit; and the sermon was well under way when the young preacher slipped quietly in and took a back seat. But Dr. Rice was equal to the emergency. After the sermon, he said: "S. J. Hunter will preach in John Street Church to-morrow morning at six o'clock, and I want you all to be there, especially the preachers." Poor Samuel did not sleep much that night, but he preached an excellent sermon the next morning to an overflowing congregation.

His fields of labor were Nanticoke, Oakville, Yonge Street North, Bowmanville, Montreal East, Montreal Second, Toronto, Elm Street; Toronto, Queen Street;

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Mr. Lake

Toronto, Elm Street (second term); Toronto, Sherbourne Street, and Hamilton Centenary Church. In 1871, he was married to Miss Charlotte Ruston, of Montreal, who (with two children, a son and daughter) now survives him.

Of his public life, extending over a period of twenty-seven years, I need not write. His record is before the Church and the world, and his "record is on high." He never sought or coveted official position, but shrunk from it, although his brethren were anxious to give it him, for perhaps no minister in our work was more popular with, and more beloved by, his brethren in the ministry. But he has said to me again and again, "All I want is a church and congregation, where I may do the work of the Master." Had he lived, no doubt official position would have been forced upon him. Already his brethren had passed him through the office of Secretary of Conference, and at the time of his death he was a member of the General Conference and of the Court of Appeal, and a director of the Wesleyan Ladies' College at Hamilton, and, in 1886, the Senate of Victoria University conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. But a higher promotion awaited him in a higher sphere, and he has joined the great multitude who "serve God day and night in His temple."

No words can express my own sense of loneliness since his death, but I am cheered by the thought that I shall meet him again—meet him in the summer-land of the soul,

“ Where the hidden wound is healed ;
Where the blighted life reblooms ;
Where the smitten heart, the freshness
Of its buoyant youth resumes ;
Where the love that here we lavish
On the withering leaves of time,
Shall have fadeless flowers to fix on
In an ever spring-bright clime,
Where we find the joy of loving
As we never loved before ;
Loving on, unchilled, unhindered,
Loving once, and evermore.
Brother, we shall meet and rest
’Mid the holy and the blest.”

The place which he held in the esteem and affection of the people of this country is evidenced in the utterances of the press, and in the utterances of the speakers at memorial services on the occasion of his death.

The *Hamilton Times* said: “In the death of the Rev. Dr. Hunter, pastor of Centenary Methodist Church, a man of large heart, vigorous intellect, sunny disposition, and rare moral courage has gone from among us. Dr. Hunter was a man whom everybody who ever heard him speak was compelled to admire and respect; a man whom those who knew him well were constrained to love. A fluent, forcible and eloquent speaker, he never failed to please, either in the pulpit or on the platform. His mind was richly stored, for he was a close student and a wide reader, and his hearers were always sure either to learn something from his discourses or to hear some old

truth presented in a new light. Above all, he was, as a preacher, earnest. His sermons were invariably fused with the white heat of sincerity and zeal in the cause of the Master, to whose service he had devoted his life. He never flinched from telling an unpopular truth. In the death of Dr. Hunter, the Methodist Church in Canada has lost one of its brightest ornaments, and the country a man who had in him vast possibilities for good, and who would have utilized them well."

The *Toronto Globe* said: "By the premature death of Rev. S. J. Hunter, D.D., the Methodists have lost a leader and the Christian pulpit one of its most eloquent voices. He was a man of noble life and lofty courage, and a powerful factor in the moral and religious movements of his time."

The *Hamilton Spectator* said: "The deceased clergyman was revered by the members of his own congregation, and had hundreds of warm friends and admirers, worshippers in other churches here. None who ever heard him preach but would go again; none who knew him but felt it a privilege to be numbered among his acquaintances."

The closing scene of his life was touchingly described by a city paper as follows: "For some time past Dr. Hunter's friends observed that he was far from being in his usual health. However, he was a man of such great spirit and energy, and so anxious to keep up every department of his work, that he would not think of taking relaxation. He was prevailed upon a few weeks ago to take a short vacation, his wife and friends

urging him that it would benefit the health of his little daughter, who had not been feeling well. The family spent about two weeks at Clifton Springs, N. Y. He returned apparently better, and on Sunday, the 22nd of April, preached both morning and evening in the Centenary Church, although many of his friends tried to persuade him not to, as the returning symptoms of disease were feared. His sermons on that occasion were models of earnestness and power. On Monday, the 23rd, he attended the funeral of Mr. F. S. Lazier's child, and on that evening complained of being unwell. Within a few hours, erysipelas had manifested itself. The progress of the disease was rapid from the beginning, and although his family physician, Dr. Rosebrugh, and Drs. Mullin and Griffin (who were called in consultation), did all in their power to arrest the malady, their efforts proved unavailing, and at 7.30 last evening (April 30th, 1888), the good and beloved pastor breathed his last."

During his illness the members of the congregation of Centenary Church, and his ministerial brethren in the city, were unremitting in their attentions. His only brothers, Rev. W. J. Hunter, D.D., and Rev. H. D. Hunter, M.A.; his sister, Mrs. Munns; Rev. Dr. Parker, his brother-in-law; Mrs. Parker, Mrs. W. J. Hunter and family, were present at his bedside when he passed away. At 3.30 in the afternoon, the above-named relatives, together with most of the pastors of the Methodist Churches in Hamilton, and other friends, joined in a religious service around the couch of the dying preacher. They united in singing "Jesus,

Lover of my soul," and "Rock of Ages," after which the Rev. W. J. Maxwell, pastor of Wesley Church, offered a touching and appropriate prayer. During his lucid moments and in his delirium, the dying pastor's conversation was confined to the Church, with its interests and wants. Shortly before he died, his brother, Dr. W. J. Hunter, said to him, "Samuel, is Jesus precious to you now?" He replied, "Yes." His brother said, "Jesus is taking you home to heaven." He replied with emphasis, "Amen."

The funeral services in Centenary Church were most impressive. More than a hundred ministers were present, including all denominations; and at Toronto, on the arrival of the train bearing his remains, an immense assemblage of friends and clergymen were present. A funeral sermon was preached in Centenary Church, on Sunday evening, May 6th, by the Rev. W. J. Maxwell, Chairman of the Hamilton District, when hundreds were unable to gain admittance.

At the memorial service held in the Centenary Church on the day of the funeral, an appropriate address was delivered by the Rev. E. H. Dewart, D.D., editor of the *Christian Guardian*, a life-long and cherished friend of the deceased. Dr. Dewart said: "The thoughts which find readiest utterance in words are not our deepest thoughts. The grandest truths and the most profound emotions that stir our hearts are the most difficult to voice in suitable language. There are moments in every life when the burdens of grief, perplexity or disappointment which press upon the soul are too heavy to find suitable expression, and

each is ready to wish that the tongue could utter the thoughts that arise within him. I profoundly realize this difficulty in venturing to address you to-day on this sadly solemn occasion. A dear family has been suddenly bereaved, and left with desolate home and hearts by the death of the loved husband and father. A congregation has had the faithful pastor and leader taken from their head; the Church of which he was a worthy and honored minister has suffered the loss of a captain and standard-bearer in the army of the living God; the community mourns the removal of an intelligent and public-spirited citizen, and many of his brethren in the ministry of the Gospel feel that the world is made poorer to them for all future life by the unexpected and painful separation from them of a generous, faithful and beloved friend and brother.

"Any attempt of mine to express all the sorrow I feel for the widow and fatherless children, for the loss that the Church has sustained by Bro. Hunter's lamented death, or my own high estimate of his character, and my sense of personal loss by the rending of the ties of a tender friendship, must be a painfully conscious failure, because I cannot attain the command of thought or feeling that is necessary for such a task.

"Under these disqualifying circumstances, all that we can do is to glance briefly at the life and character of our departed brother, and to gather up a few practical lessons, to inspire in bearing the burdens and fighting the battles of our own earthly pilgrimage. To me it is especially trying and delicate to speak of

Bro. Hunter's character. He was a tried and trusted personal friend, to whom I was bound by a strong and tender affection. I never had any doubt that he was true to me behind my back as well as before my face; and, after all, the men and women who are capable of loyal and unselfish friendship must be reckoned among the best gifts of heaven. They brighten the darkness of earth, and their fidelity and love are one of the things which make life worth living. As a preacher, I need not remind you, who have listened so often to his forcible and eloquent expositions of divine truth, that he was an able minister of the New Testament, manly and outspoken in his utterances, clear and vigorous in thought, expressive and felicitous in language, and effective and impressive in the presentation of the great practical truths of the Gospel which relate to Christian experience and duty. He had a high idea of the work of preaching, and gave it the supreme place in his thoughts. He was pre-eminently a 'preacher of righteousness.' The pulpit was his throne, from which he spoke with the dignity and authority of an ambassador of Christ, his Master. He never lowered the eternal standards of truth and righteousness to win the favor of those who wanted to have smooth things preached unto them. The Church can ill spare preachers of this type. Dr. Hunter was a manly, independent man, who had the courage to utter what he believed to be true, even though his adherence to his convictions might cause a loss of friends and popularity. He never degraded his manhood to make each man believe that he agreed

with his notions. Amid the time-serving and vacillation which prevail around us, it helps to strengthen faith in our poor humanity to come into contact with one who believes something and dares to stand by what he deems right. I do not hesitate to apply to our translated friend the words of our great poet :

“ ‘ His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might
Stand up and say to all the world,
This was a man !’

And, after all, an honest man is the noblest work of God. He was a genial and cheerful Christian, inclined to look on the bright side of things, and bringing sunshine into every home that he entered. He was a living contradiction of the allegation that the Christian religion is a sour and melancholy thing. And why should not Christians be cheerful? God is their Father; Christ their Saviour; and they have a sure title to ‘an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.’ Though not demonstrative or unduly forward to speak of himself, he so lived that he was ever able and ready to testify to his calm faith in Christ as his Saviour and his sure hope of life eternal. Our confidence in the safety and happiness of our dying friends does not rest upon the expressions of the dying hour, but upon the unfaltering assurance that He who hath enabled them to witness a good confession in life will be their strength and safety in death, and bring them safely home to Himself in that heaven where sorrow and death are unknown. It is

meet and right, when our friends are taken away, to recall those features of their character that were the ground of our love and esteem and the secret of their usefulness; and thus they, being dead, yet speak to us, calling us upward and onward in the path of duty. We can never, in this world, gather up the whole results of the influences which emanate from a brave and godly life,

“ ‘For when a good man dies,
For years beyond our ken,
The light he leaves behind him lies
Upon the paths of men.’

“Our departed brother was converted in early life, and while yet a youth consecrated himself to the service in which he spent his life. The noblest types of Christian manhood and womanhood are those who in the dew of their youth give themselves to God, and are trained up with broad and scriptural views of duty and character. We want a generation trained from infancy in right views of life, of liberality and self-sacrifice. Those who begin the Christian life late have already lived a large part of their lives with wrong standards of duty and selfish habits that are terribly hard to shake off; for, even after they have professed faith in Christ, these wrong views and habits, like the Egyptian task-masters, follow hard after them and limit their usefulness.

“The suddenness of Bro. Hunter’s removal once more reminds us that there is but a step between us and death; that only a thin, filmy veil separates us from the spiritual world. The voice of God’s providence loudly speaks to us to-day, proclaiming that ‘the

night cometh when no man can work.' Be instant, in season and out of season, for none of us know how long we shall have to work. How little I thought, when I sat in the twilight a few weeks ago, talking with Bro. Hunter, at Clifton Springs, that that would be our last conversation 'until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.' How important that all of us—especially those of us whose hair is becoming silvered with age—live as John Wesley lived, so that if we knew our death was to take place in a few hours, we would need to make no change in the way in which we would spend the intervening time. In such an hour as this, under the shadow of a great sorrow, when death breaks the tenderest earthly ties, how hopeless and desolate would we be without the hopes and consolations of the Gospel! We stand by the lifeless forms of our loved ones, and ask the old question of humanity, 'If a man die, shall he live again?' Earthly wisdom has no answer. We turn to Him who hath 'abolished death and brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel,' and we hear His hope-inspiring words, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' God's promises are not like the untried theories of men. They have been tested and vindicated by a great crowd of witnesses. These stars of truth have shed down their light and consolation upon the darkened scenery of earthly sorrow and death. The orphan, when father and mother, who would feel for his griefs, are silent in the grave, has found in the God of his father, a 'friend who sticketh

closer than a brother.' The widow, when the oak to which she clung has been uprooted in the storm, has heard the voice of her Father, 'leave thy fatherless children with Me, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in Me.' Thank God, this world of shadows and sorrows is not the whole of life. There is a world above, where sorrow is unknown. The broken friendships of earth shall be re-formed; parted friends shall meet in the sunlight of heaven's unfading joy."

The Rev. D. L. Brethour, Ph.B., President of the Niagara Conference; the Rev. A. E. Puss, M.A., and the Rev. W. J. Maxwell took part in the preliminary services; and at the grave, in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, the burial service was read by the late Rev. John A. Williams, General Superintendent of the Methodist Church, and the Rev. Dr. Potts, Secretary of Education. The pall-bearers were Rev. Dr. Burwash, Chancellor of Victoria University; Dr. Burns, Principal of Hamilton Ladies' College; Dr. Briggs, Book Steward; Dr. Hugh Johnston, and Revs. W. J. Maxwell and John Kay.

When the grave was filled in, the assemblage sang in subdued voice and in faltering accents,

"Give me the wings of faith to rise
Within the veil, and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
How bright their glories be."

And we turned slowly away from the last resting-place of the sacred remains, feeling that earth was poorer and heaven richer, and our dear one was "forever with the Lord."

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SERMONS ON THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

I.

POWER—INFLUENCE—ASSURANCE.

“For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.”—1 THESS. i. 5.

PRIOR to the utterance of these words Paul had been on two great missionary tours. He had gone over all Asia Minor, and, with Silas as his traveling companion, he is now meditating a journey into Asia—probably extending his thoughts to the far-distant East. But while he is contemplating this tour, a singular vision appears before him—a man from an entirely different country, not an Asiatic, but a European, and in pathetic language, he says, “Come over into Macedonia and help us.” The stranger was from Macedonia, a province of Europe. The call was to bring this Gospel of Christ out of Asia and start it on its wonderful career on the continent of Europe. Paul obeyed; and in company with Silas went first to the city of Philippi. They there began the first Gospel preaching on the continent of Europe, and opened up that wonderful history which, for eighteen centuries, has been unfolding itself—extending from that continent to us—constituting the great religious spirit and history of our own national life. But, strange to say, with a continent before him, and uncounted myriads of souls waiting for the word of life, Paul soon finds

himself arrested, cast into prison, and thrust into the inner cell. I have often thought, on reading this history, that this was the proper occasion for the faith of Paul and Silas to give way—at least, it is under circumstances of this kind that our faith in God and His providence generally breaks down. While all is prosperous and successful, it does not seem hard for us to believe that we are in favor with God; but when adversity and disappointment come, we begin to wonder. But not so with these men. They woke the echoes of the midnight hour by strains of prayer and triumphant songs of praise. Soon after, an earthquake shook the prison; the chains fell from the limbs of the imprisoned heroes, and the jailor, in his terror, cried, “Men and brethren, what must I do?” The earthquake that shook that Philippian prison shook all the continent. Forth from the prison they went; preached in the city; gathered around them a church, and left for us one of the most touching and tender letters of Paul, addressed to this church at Philippi. Subsequently they went over into Thessalonica, and then over into other parts of Europe. After an absence from Thessalonica of three years, Timothy brings Paul word that certain things existed in the church there which needed immediate attention. They were beginning to have doubts about this new religion that came to them from Asia, and some feared they had been too hasty in believing and professing it; and while they were in this state of questioning and hesitating, Paul writes them this epistle from which my text is taken. Now, it seems to me, that if I were

going to write to a church in a state of hesitancy and doubt, if able, I should have written a very learned letter, quoted a great deal from the prophecies, laid down a number of propositions, given them a very close, compact argument to prove that the Gospel must be true; and as a result, I suppose all the learned men and the skeptics and the free-thinkers would have had a grand time in trying to riddle my arguments and upset my propositions. Ah, Paul was wiser than I would have been. He sits down and writes to this doubting church a most remarkable letter; properly speaking, not a logical set phrase or proposition in it, but simply a plain, practical appeal to the Thessalonians themselves. It is—"Remember." Do you not remember what the Gospel is as I preached it unto you? Not a word only—a beautiful theory, an oratorical essay, a philosophical system—but that it came in power and laid hold of your hearts; that it brought with it the Holy Ghost as a demonstration of its divinity, and He brought within you His own divine assurance. Now here in this text we have the three great things which must ever stand as the evidence and glory of the Gospel of Christ.

I. Its "power."

II. The accompanying influence of the Holy Ghost.

III. The assurance it brings to the individual.

I. Then the argument of the apostle is, would you know the Gospel to be of God? look at its power. Mark you, brethren, Paul had been preaching the Gos-

pel only fourteen years. The Saviour had ascended to heaven only some twenty-five years before this, and yet Paul says, look at the power of the Gospel and see in that an evidence of its divinity; yes, for in twenty-five years, since the despised Nazarene went up on high, His word had gone through all India and Palestine and Asia Minor, and had overleaped the borders of Western Asia and had sounded out over Europe. And if in twenty-five years the Gospel could appeal to the manifestations of its power as the evidence of its divinity, what may we do with this thought when we add to it the centuries that have passed since then; when we sweep the mind over the history of Christianity as it has come down along the line of the ages, scattering its benedictions among men and manifesting its power among the nations of the earth? Power is of God. You can't think of one without thinking of the other. We stand out in the storm, and tremble as the thunder rolls over our heads, or the flashing lightning shoots athwart the dome of heaven, and say, What power! and think of God who wields it. We stand on the ocean shore, hear the lashing of its billows and see it tossing mighty ships as bits of cork, and say, How matchless in power is the God of ocean! We look into the heavens above us, and see the worlds wheeling in their courses; we gaze at the sun, 880,000 miles in diameter, a million and a half times larger than our earth, so that if it were hollow and worlds the size of this had been thrown in one every day since the days of Abraham, the sun would hardly yet be filled up. We gaze off from the great central orb at a distance of

35,000,000 miles, and see old Mercury, sweeping round the sun in 88 days at a rate of 100,000 miles an hour; looking on still, at a distance of 68,000,000 miles we see Venus spinning round the sun in 288 days; away off still, 140,000,000 miles, Mars completes his circuit in 686 days; at a distance of 500,000,000 miles we come to that wonderful old world Jupiter, with his four moons, taking twelve years to travel round the sun; and far off there, 906,000,000 miles, Saturn, 75,000 miles in diameter, with his eight moons, and beautiful rings that appear like threads of golden light, takes thirty years to make his circuit; and still on, 1,880,000,000 miles, Uranus in eighty years performs his revolution; and still outward 2,880,000,000 miles, Neptune sweeps his orbit in 160 years. And when we think of all this, and think also that the stars, many of them, are suns, around which other worlds are moving, stars so distant that light, travelling at the rate of 12,000,000 miles a minute, has not yet reached the earth from some of them. I say when we thus look upon this vast universe, system of worlds rising one above another—sun systems, group systems, nebular systems—and see them all taking their places with all the ease and naturalness that the bud unfolds and the flower blooms, there comes a sense of the infinite, and we exclaim in awe with the royal Psalmist, "Power belongeth unto Thee, O God!"

Now, the apostle says there is power in this Gospel. What then? Why, it is the power of God. It is the Gospel of power—it is the Gospel of God. That it is so, you may see written on the page of

history. Strolling along the Thames Embankment one day, in London, I saw what to me was an object of peculiar interest. It was a rose-colored stone, $68\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, about $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide at the base, gradually tapering toward the top to a width of between four and five feet, and then terminating in a summit called a pyramidion, from its being shaped like a pyramid. Each of its four sides had on it three columns of hieroglyphical inscriptions. It was Cleopatra's Needle—originally hewn in the famous quarries of Syene, in Southern Egypt; subsequently, one of six obelisks that adorned the approach to the Temple of the Sun at On, in ancient Egypt, and afterwards conveyed to Alexandria, to grace the Cæsarium, a temple built in honor of the Cæsars, where it became associated with the name of Cleopatra. Abraham and Joseph and Moses may have walked under the shadow of that stone, when the seeds of those mighty thoughts—afterwards to produce such wondrous fruits—were germinating in their minds; and Jeremiah who, at a later period, lifted up his voice against the Temple of the Sun, may have sat down beside it and wept for the iniquities of idolatry. Egypt then was a mighty nation, whose sword was dreaded by the world. But what of Egypt now? Her cities are heaps of ruins, her splendid temples are thrown down. She is unable to retain possession of the monuments of her former power; the whole of the literature of her kings is comprised in what is written on their tombs. Those tombs resound to the footsteps of intruding strangers, and her pyramids only perpetuate the remembrance

of her vanity and pride. And what of the land in which Cleopatra's Needle now stands? A land of barbarism a few centuries ago—where the awful rites of the Druid soddened the soil with human sacrificial blood—an infant in age compared with hoary Egypt, yet to-day leading the world in all that is Christian, prosperous, noble and good? And what of the nation over which Cleopatra ruled? Melted away in the chalice of time, as her proud queen tried to melt her jewels; swept away, crushed and utterly destroyed. And why this difference between Egypt and Rome and Britain? Simply because the power of the Gospel has been in Britain, and the power of the Gospel has not been in Rome and Egypt. Any man passing through the Paris Exposition could pick out the Christian nations by their products. China, Persia, Arabia, and all the nations of the Orient, nodding under the weight of ages when Christ was upon the earth, stood side by side with the younger Christian nations; but the younger move forward in prosperity, success and growth; the elder, like marble statues, stand where they stood centuries ago. And why? Because, in the one case, the Gospel came to them in power; in the other, idolatry or Mohammedanism cramped and destroyed their life.

But now, what is that strange power that has made the Gospel such a success in the world? I answer, it is in its truth and in the fact that it is true. My friends, if one falsehood, one misstatement had ever been found in the Gospel, it would have ceased long ago from among men. If any lie could be found in it, it would

kill it. Now apply that fact. For 1800 years this Gospel has been winning its way in the world. At every point it has had its enemies. It was met at the very beginning by the keenest, subtlest infidelity, and has faced the most envenomed opposition in every age and country. These foes have been standing vulture-like, looking to find a flaw or error. Keenest contempt, bitterest sarcasm, broadest ridicule have been brought to bear upon it. A sorer trial than this came upon it through a false Church, hiding it away from the people, adding to it their own superstitions. A little later, another storm of infidelity broke out in Germany and France. The keenest intellects, the broadest learning, the severest criticism were brought to bear upon it. Yet a little later in England, a still broader and deeper and more terrible form of infidelity broke out against it. And in these days, or during the last few years, a new form of infidelity has struck the Gospel—scientific, close, destructive, incisive—and yet through all these trials the Gospel has extended through the ages, and lives to-day, not a word stricken out, not a doctrine proved false, not a fact disproved in its statements. Is not this evidence that it must be true? Doesn't it look presumptuous for us in this day to suppose that after 1800 years of searching and effort, trying to find an error or falsehood in it, we should yet be able to discover something wrong in it? If it has stood the test for 1800 years, and lives to-day mighty in the power of truth, doubtless it will survive the nineteenth century. But then there is not only truth in this Gospel, but a particular kind of truth.

Perhaps I can best get this thought before you by an illustration. Not long after my text was uttered there was a man in the city of Rome—a thoughtful, inquiring man. This man went over all the literature of Rome, passed over into Greece to study all its learning, went down into Egypt and talked with the old priests, and familiarized himself with all their knowledge, but his heart was empty and hungry still. One day, as he was walking through the city of Rome, he heard a cry that was common in those days, "The Christians to the lions! The Christians to the lions!" and the multitude began to move toward the great Coliseum. Inside the Coliseum, arranged on its galleries, were perhaps 20,000 people. In a little while a wicket gate opened, and a woman was led out into the arena. She was young and beautiful; there she stood, calm, unmoved, self-possessed, her hands folded on her breast, her eyes lifted towards heaven. Presently she opened her lips and sweetly sang one of the early Christian hymns, and her sweet notes rippled like waves of sound from heaven over the mighty throng. Soon, from another gate, a great Numidian lion bounded into the arena; but she sang on, and the great beast himself seemed to be arrested as he saw the calm, grand woman. It was only for a moment. With a mighty bound he pounced upon her, and soon blood and fragments lay scattered on the ground. A great shout went up from the multitude, and the dreadful show was over. This man looked awe-stricken at the sight, and as he was going out he placed himself beside one of the despised Christians, and said, "I perceive you are a Christian.

Tell me what is the secret of that woman's death. What made her so calm? Why, of all the crowd, was she alone trustful and self-possessed?" And the Christian said, "Because she is a believer in Jesus Christ; that is the way all our people die. To die is simply to pass to the bosom of Jesus, to dwell with Him forever." "Come home with me," said this philosopher, "and tell me more of this." The man went with him and told him the truth of the Gospel of Christ. It went to his heart, and he said, "I have travelled at home and abroad, in Greece and Egypt, searching for truth like this, and here it comes to me at my own door. Your God shall be my God, your Christ shall be my Christ." He was converted, and the world has recognized in him a character almost apostolic—Clement of Rome, who, in his turn, died a martyr. Brethren, this is the power of the truth; it converts the heart, it meets man's deepest needs, answers the inquiries of the human soul, and brings man into communion with his God. It is God's power in the conscience.

II. The influence of the Holy Ghost.

The Gospel is something more than truth standing naked and alone; it comes in power and the Holy Ghost. When the Redeemer had about finished His ministry He said to His disciples one day, "Now I have given you the words which the Father gave Me; you have the words, you have the truth, all the doctrines are in your hands; but wait, tarry in Jerusalem till ye receive the promise of the Father." And when He was leaving them, He said, "Go ye into all the

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world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," and "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The apostles put themselves in waiting attitude, and by-and-by the Holy Ghost came upon them so full in His endowments that it overleaped the bonds of human force, and became miraculous, spoke in tongues, healed diseases, wrought miracles. And when the apostles said to the Thessalonians, "Do you not remember the Holy Ghost that came along with the Gospel?" I suppose there had been miraculous manifestations of the Spirit in Thessalonica. But you say, what has this to do with the nineteenth century? There is no speaking with tongues, no miracle-working now. Is the Holy Ghost still in the Gospel? He is. "If I go to my Father," etc., "He will abide with you"—how long?—"forever." The Holy Ghost is in the Gospel. You read this Word of God. How different from any other book. Why? The Holy Ghost is in it. Men are convinced of sin, led out of lives of sin into fellowship with the divine, and their souls are made glad and joyful. What is it? It is the Holy Ghost. What was it that came like a baptism of peace and joy to your soul? It was the Holy Ghost. What was it that in the time of temptation, when you had almost given way, sent some strange power of conscience upon you—some sensitiveness that stirred you up to your danger and saved you? It was the Holy Ghost. What was it that in the time of your sickness, poverty or embarrassment, came like a refreshing shower from God to comfort and sustain you? It was the Holy Ghost.

What was it on that most solemn of all occasions, when you walked behind all that was left of some loved one, and saw him hid away in the silence of the grave, and all the earth seemed desolate and void; what was it that came like a benediction of peace on the breaking heart, like a balm upon the wounded spirit, and caused you to grow strong and courageous in God? It was the Holy Ghost. Thank God, the Holy Ghost is in this Gospel. This is our comfort. Behind all the weakness of the preacher, and the frailty of the earthen vessel, there is the mighty power of God. O Divine Spirit, be in Thy Gospel to-night! Convince of sin and of righteousness and judgment. Lead some poor souls into the light and joy of truth.

III. But there is something more in this Gospel—there is much assurance. That is, the Gospel is its own evidence. It is simply a repetition, in another form, of our Lord's saying, "If any man will do," etc. St. John has the same idea—"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." The Gospel comes to the world with this broad, bold challenge: "If any man will do it"—accept it, live it—"he shall know that it is of God." Try it, and if it does not bring its own evidence, cast it away. Live it and practise it, and it will bring assurance of its truth. Assurance—"much assurance"—a restful, joyful, peaceful assurance that this Gospel is of God. O my friends, I want you to try this for yourselves. Let me give you some illustrations here. Bishop James,

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of the M. E. Church, now a saint in glory, used to tell how a special meeting was being held, and one person observed at it a few times who excited a great deal of interest, for she was a Jewess. Her husband was a gay man of the world, who went to theatres and the like, and just to relieve the tedium of the evening she used to go to the meeting, just across the street from her home. By-and-by she found herself asking, "What if Jesus was the Christ?" One night at the meeting the conviction took hold of her soul, "Jesus is the Christ;" and with it came the terrible thought, "I am a lost soul, for my nation slew Him." In an agony she went home. When her husband came home about 12.30 at night, she met him in the vestibule, and with swollen eyes, said, "Husband, go to the house of the nearest Christian neighbor and borrow a New Testament." He tried to argue and laugh her out of it, but it was no use. At length, he went and raised the neighbor up and asked for the loan of a New Testament. The man who lent it was one who had noticed the Jewess at the meeting. He dressed himself, went to a Christian friend, and said, "There is work for us to-night at the Jewish mansion; let us go there." They went and rang the bell, and the Jewess met them in the hall with the smile of heaven on her face and said, "Oh, I've found Him, Jesus is the Christ!" And then she told them that when the New Testament was brought she went to her own room. Imagine it, if you can. Suppose you had never seen a Testament—never heard one of its chapters read! Then she said when she had got

alone, she laid the book upon the bed, knelt, lifted up her hand to heaven, and said, "O God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, give me light, give me light." And then she opened the book at random, and began to read the first chapter of Romans, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ," etc. And she read down through those verses, each one pouring through her soul like hot thunderbolts, until she came to this passage, which she read for the first time in her life, "For I am not ashamed," etc. She stopped. Tears blinded her eyes. "To the Jew first, to the Jew first! I am not ashamed." Her soul was filled with joy unutterable. The Gospel comes with much assurance. Bless God, Christ notifies when He saves us. "All hail the power of Jesus' name."

Charles Wesley was for a long time a clergyman before he got the assurance of salvation. At length he was laid on a bed of sickness, and there, he says, he gave up all thoughts of making his own heart better, and trusted his whole soul to the care of Jesus. He felt his heart glow with a sense of pardoning love, and he took up his pen and wrote a hymn, entitled, "Rejoicing in having found Christ."

"O how happy are they
Who their Saviour obey."

A little while ago good old Bishop McIlvaine, of the Episcopal Church of the United States, died while abroad in England. The clergyman who was watching beside him heard him say as his last hour came on, "Sing to me." "What shall I sing?" "Sing 'Just as I

am.” Presently he again said, “Sing again.” “What shall I sing?” Episcopalian as he was, he said, “Sing C. Wesley’s hymn, ‘Jesus, Lover of my soul.’” That was sung; and in a little while he said, “Sing again.” “What shall I sing?” “Sing ‘Rock of Ages.’” They began to sing it, and while they were singing that last verse, “When I rise to worlds unknown,” the good man rose on its sweet notes and took his flight to glory. Ah! this Gospel comes with much assurance. “I know whom I have believed.” I’ve seen a Swedish paraphrase of that text that I like very much :

“I know whom I’ve believed,
When my sins remembered roll,
With bitter pains of penitence,
Like billows o’er my soul.

“Contritely, then, in Jesus’ name,
As near my God I come,
I see Him stretch a father’s arms
To take His wand’rer home.

“I know whom I’ve believed,
When the hour of death draws near,
When the painful heat of day is cooled,
And coming shades appear.

“My Jesus by His death has brought
On death destruction sure;
He lives; therefore my soul with Him
Shall evermore endure.”

O friends, you may all have this much assurance now! Come to God, trusting in Christ. Devote your

life to Him, resolve to live a Christian life. Don't stand off arguing about the Gospel, try it on its own plan and challenge, and it will come to you in power, breaking the dominion of sin; in the Holy Ghost, revealing to you God's will; and in much assurance, enabling you to say I "have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

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II.

LOVING AN UNSEEN SAVIOUR.

"Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."—1 PETER i. 8.

THESE words were addressed to those who were "strangers scattered abroad," and who had not personally seen the Lord Jesus. Not only this, but they were men who were plunged in sorrow. Mark how Peter speaks of them in the preceding verses. He says they were at that time in "heaviness through manifold temptations." He speaks of the "trial of their faith" as a "trial by fire." And then, just like a flood of sunlight coming down after a storm, he speaks of rejoicing, and not simply of rejoicing, but of "joy unspeakable and full of glory." It is evident, furthermore, that this rejoicing is not a thing of the future only ; it was a living and present emotion in the men to whom the apostle wrote. He does not tell them simply that they would rejoice in the future ; he does not say merely that the hope of blessedness in a coming life cheered them amid present suffering ; but that, apart both from the future and their hope of it, there was in their souls, then and there, a joy, deep, calm, unutterable. And now, in studying this passage, let us note these three particulars :—

- I. A barrier to love.
- II. A substitute for Christ's presence.
- III. The result of faith.

I. A barrier to our love. "Whom having not seen, ye love." Christ is out of sight. John leaned on His bosom. Peter conversed with Him. The apostles had Him as their daily companion. But we have never seen Him. You know, if your friend is not only absent, but if you have never seen him—if you have only heard of him—how difficult it is to love him. Let us have seen him even once, and memory has room for action and imagination has scope for play. But Christ is invisible, and "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And then, not only have we never seen the Lord, but bodily, He is at a great distance from us. "The king has gone into a far country," and then the precise locality of that country is unknown. How trying to have to say of a friend, "He is gone abroad, but I have no idea where!" Only give us an idea of his locality—the country, the district, the spot where he has settled—and immediately fancy constructs a home round which affection's roses and honeysuckle twine. Is not this ignorance of precise locality one reason why we dread the death of those who are dear to us, even when we have the best hope that all is well with them? They go far away, and we cannot know exactly where. That the heavens contain Christ is certain; but where are those heavens? We look up to sun, moon and

stars, but though they all praise Him, if they know the secret, they never tell it. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him." And then, to add to our perplexity, how strange often are His communications with us? Plain and direct are our communings with Him, but very mysterious often are His with us. It is sometimes hard to understand Him. You have gone to him sometimes and earnestly addressed Him, and He seemed to preserve a strange silence, till, in an agony, you cried, "Anything but this silence, O Lord: hold not Thy peace at my tears." And then, when the silence is broken, it is perhaps by "terrible things in righteousness that He answers you." And talk as we may, it is difficult to bear up and hold on amid these mysteries and discouragements. If the Syrophenician woman needed all her might to keep her heart steady in the midst of Christ's seeming repulses—needed that, even when she stood by His side and had it in her power to give answer for answer—can it be easy to preserve a joyous heart when the seeming repulses are all there, but no Christ is beside us to help us through the mystery? Oh, but God has not left us in the dark. There is a substitute for His presence.

II. The substitute. "Believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

We have not His bodily presence, but the lack of that is made up, and more than made up, by faith in Him as our present personal Saviour. Now, take

faith in two or three of its aspects, and see how this comes out. Take it in its power to realize. This power it possesses, for it is "the evidence of things not seen"—that is, it has the power of converting things which have existence, but are unseen, into things which plainly appear. Now, direct this power to realize all the present locality of Christ. "He is gone into the heavens, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him." The eye of the body in vain scans the heavens to behold Him. Imagination struggles to fill up the outline of revelation, but fails; but faith, grasping revelation, transforms the unseen into the visible, and clings to it as the true. As we often sing:

"Faith lends its realizing light;
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly."

Out of God's utterances it constructs and kindles a chain of golden lamps, reaching from the throne of the Eternal, down through myriads of worlds, through the sun's circuit and the moon's pathway, till with the last lamp burning in our bosom, and looking along that line, we "see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." But there is a closer answer to the question, "Where is Christ?" and that answer is couched in three words, "I in you." He is on the throne, in the starry firmament, on this beauteous earth, and in the temple of the spiritual heart. And how is He discerned there? Let the apostle answer: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in

me." And let me say, brethren, that this presence is better than the bodily. It is far closer. If you read the Gospels carefully, you will see that before the resurrection there was a something which kept the disciples at a distance from their Lord. They couldn't understand Him, and they didn't venture to say to Him what they said to each other. They were amazed that He could say to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me?" But when His body went to heaven, and His spiritual presence came, there was this intimate closeness, "I in them, and Thou in Me." Compare the epistles of Paul, when he is speaking of his own inward life in Christ, with anything we have in the Gospels down to the time of the ascension, and you will see how the very inmost web of the soul of St. Paul was shot through and through by the lines of the life of Christ, mingled so with the lines of his own life that the two could not be separated; that "neither life nor death, principalities nor powers could separate." And then the spiritual presence is more abiding. The bodily presence was liable to the accidents of circumstance. The disciples were on the sea, and the Saviour was on the shore. But now, the presence knows no accident. It is with each believer in the midst of the fire, and Christ is the union of spirit with spirit—it is the spirit of man brought into unity with the Spirit of the Lord. And it is universal, in every place, and to all time to come.

Well, then again, take faith in its power to appropriate. "I know whom I have believed." Sometimes

in our ignorance we fancy, if like Mary or John, we could tell Him our anxieties, there would be perfect quiet. Well, test this matter. You want to see Him as He appeared on earth. Did not thousands of suffering ones see Him, but only to find no beauty in Him? And as He unfolded His marvellous life, did not multitudes drop off from Him, at length He was compelled to ask His disciples, "Will ye also go away?" Did not Peter and Judas? Wherever hearts really went out to Him, it was not the eye of the body, but the faith of the heart that was at work. "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." And did He not say to Thomas, "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed." Or, look at Christ glorified. Do you feel that a personal interview would be balm to your troubled spirit? Would it? How did the glory affect the apostles on Hermon and John on Patmos? No; but life within its appropriating power be at work within, that power which carries us to Him, and then constrains us to throw our feeble arms around Him, and say, "Thou art mine!" that power which lifts up sins and casts them into the fountain of His blood, burying them as in the depths of the sea forever; that power which lets us see ourselves in heaven's mirror, "kings and priests to God;" let that power be ours, and though these eyes do not see Him, we have Him in a way mere sight could never give Him. We have Him as though to us only He belonged, in all the wealth of His present grace and all the grandeur of eternal glory. Oh, how often is this experienced! Have you ever been in great straits,

beleaguered on every side by trials and temptations? Look at that poor soul in like circumstances! The powers of his soul assemble and converse about the matter. "What is to be done now? Clearly everything is against me. I have often escaped before, but this time I am fast on every hand." Now Conscience rises and says, "It's provocation of the Lord that is doing all this." And Desire, anxious and pale, falls on her knees, and cries, "Make haste, O Lord, to help, the spirit faints." Love, fair and beautiful, cries, "Hold on;" but just then she catches sight of a dark cloud and faints. "What of the night, now?" asks Reason; and Sight replies, "It's dark—it's getting darker—there the last star is gone out." But now, calm and lofty, with her eye fixed on a bright star that none can see but herself, Faith exclaims, "'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' Conscience—Be still, all my sin I lay on the Lamb of God. Desire—'Continue instant in prayer.' I am looking up and expecting an answer. Love—Hold on, 'He shall deliver thee in six troubles, and in the seventh there shall no evil touch thee.' Reason—Wait, 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' Sight—You are not fit to speak at this conference."

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

There, now, the soul is itself again—there's light in the dwelling once more. True, the storm rages with-

out. "The floods lift up their waves: the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." "Though ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

But further, look at faith's power to anticipate. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for." Whatever interpretation is put upon the word substance, faith is practically the power of bringing into the present foreground, and so far, by anticipation, enjoying the bliss of the future. Faith is continually on the wing, backwards and forwards between earth and heaven, and reporting to those who love His appearing, the beauty of the King and the glory of the land that is yet afar off. She brings from the King's galleries pictures of fairer scenes than eye ever witnessed, and hangs them up in the heart of the way-worn pilgrim.

"Oh, what a blessed hope is ours,
While here o'er earth we stray !
We more than taste the heavenly powers,
And antedate that day."

III. The result. And just here it is important that we should mark the distinction between joy and happiness—joy in a Christian sense, and happiness in the popular sense. The grand difference between them is, that joy rises from within the soul to pervade its life, while happiness is an emotion awakened by external circumstances. Joy may grow strong amid circumstances that would destroy happiness. To be happy,

for instance, is to possess wealth and comfort, social sympathies, a name respected and revered. But in the deepest dens of poverty, in the lonely solitude of midnight hills, in the desolation of barren islands, amid scorn, desertion and slander, joy may rise in the soul and flood its being with the peace of heaven. The deepest cry of man is not for happiness, but to be pure, noble, self-sacrificing, divine. To be freed from the curse of self, to be filled with the eternal love that shall rouse us to labor for God, in one word, to be filled with what the Bible calls "the peace of God." Now, in order to this joy, two things are necessary: Inward harmony of soul, and the awakening of all the emotions by the deepest love, and faith in Christ produces these. It creates harmony in the soul. Where there is inward discord joy is impossible. There may be the transient flashes of happiness, but if the heart be at war with itself there will be no joy. Now, belief in Christ is self-surrender to Him, and destroys this war. Having yielded his heart entirely to Christ, man is at one with himself and is at peace; and then belief in Christ fills the heart with the deepest love. Man's soul is not only discordant, it is vacant. It cries out for emotion. Vacancy is the death of joy, and it is this very thing that sends men on that perpetual chase after happiness which we see in the world. Christ fills the vacant heart and rouses those profoundest sympathies and loves. The feeling of a love in Christ, high as heaven, deep as man's sinful unbelief, broad as eternity, the perception of that love in all its grandeur, caring for us in every personal sorrow

sympathizing with us in every individual experience, this fills the heart's vacancy and produces joy, and this joy deepens and broadens. Heaven is not only a thing to be hoped for. The soul that feels the love of Christ grasps eternity now, has within it now an earnest of the conquest of the grave.

But you will notice, further, the character which the apostle gives to this joy, "Unspeakable and full of glory." Unspeakable! I can't find vent in shouts and amens and hallelujahs. There is a sorrow too deep for tears, and there is a joy too deep and calm for language to utter it. This is best shown in the fact that it deepens in the midst of sorrow. So was it in the men to whom the apostle wrote. While persecution was lighting her beacon fires, and the approach of danger summoned them like a trumpet call to stand ready for their faith to die, their joy grew calmer amid the heaviness of manifold temptations. So was it with the martyrs. Outcasts in strange cities, imprisoned in deepest dungeons, those martyr-souls were lighted, like peaceful homes, with the joy of Christ, which they wouldn't have exchanged for the palace of an emperor. The Sabbath of eternity, with its music, descended into them amid the baptism of fire. What mattered it to them when death came, or where it found them; whether under the flashing axe of the headsman, or the roaring of the lion? They felt the embrace of an immortal tenderness, which filled them with joy before the mortal agony had ceased its pangs. And have you not known something like this, though in smaller measure? Have you never seen the joy of

grief—the joy of Christ resting like a sleeping light upon the soul amid all the stormy blasts of trouble, and thus proved what Peter means by calling that joy a thing unspeakable.

“Full of glory”—that is, it is heaven already begun. There is a most significant suggestion here. Some men seem to fancy they shall gain joy by entering heaven. But joy, as we have seen, is not gained or lost by any change of state, it belongs to the immortal soul. You cannot get into heaven. Heaven must get into you. You must carry heaven with you in the joy of Christ, or you will find no heaven beyond the grave. But some may ask, “Is this feeble rejoicing of the Christian on earth the real element of the eternal heaven?” Remember, your present joy will lose its imperfections. Your present sacrifice will be shorn of its painfulness—that which is perfect will have come, and that which is in part will be done away. Then the “love which hopeth all things, endureth all things,” will be the light that shall not fail, when the lamp of faith and hope are lost in a blaze of glory. “We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Meanwhile, let ours be a life of faith in the unseen Saviour, for though unseen, He is ever near, and longing after fuller conformity, let us pray with our poet :

“Perish, then, thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be ;
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in thee.”

III.

MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE THINGS.

“ Whose voice then shook the earth : but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”—HEB. xii. 26, 27.

IN this 26th verse the apostle quotes from Haggai's prophecy, 2nd chapter and 6th verse. Predicting the birth of Christ, the prophet says, “ Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come : and I will fill this house with glory.” That prophecy was literally fulfilled, for, though at the particular moment of the Saviour's birth, the temple of Januss was shut—an emblem of peace—an event which had not taken place for seven hundred years, as if nature and even the passions of men would, by their silence, do homage to a present Deity. Yet, even then, the king, and priesthood, and Jerusalem were greatly troubled. And if we ascend the stream of time to an earlier period, we find the whole world in a state of agitation, preparing for His coming. Never were there as many and as violent commotions in so short a period as elapsed between Haggai's prophecy and Christ's manifestation. The mighty kingdom of Babylon sank

before the Persian, the Persian before the Grecian, and the Grecian before the Roman, in the brief space of five hundred years. God shook the nations, and out of their strife and violence at length emerged His meek and merciful Son. Under the ruins of the ancient world lay the germs of a new creation, and from these germs Christ's spiritual kingdom arose. At first it was eminently aggressive, but a check came to it—and that check was not from its open enemies, but from its avowed friends. In process of time there grew up and closed around it a huge Christendom, the chiefs of which, had they been able, would have dethroned Christ in His own kingdom. He, the King of saints, would have been made to sit at the feet of ambitious priests; the Opener of the prison to them that are bound, would have been imprisoned; the world's Deliverer would have been enslaved; and the risen Lord would have been crucified afresh, and buried in a new tomb, the tomb of a so-called Christendom. Hence another mighty shaking became necessary, and it came; and so on through the ages revolutions in Christendom have been needful to the freedom and progress of the truth—needful to the shaking down of the things that are made by man, that the things that are of God may be the more clearly seen in their divineness, stability and beauty. It is ours to live in a day when we are told that the old foundations of our faith are shifting, that landmarks are being changed, that the all-devouring sea is eating away at the base of the cliffs on one side, and the ebbing tide is gradually relinquishing its

domain on the other, leaving new hills and valleys for men to build among and rejoice. Well, all this is only a part of a great work going on, that did not begin with us, and will not end with us—the removal of things that are shaken, that things which cannot be shaken, may remain. And now let us think for a little about these things.

1. You will notice that in this chapter the apostle draws a striking contrast between the material and the immaterial—the earthly and the spiritual. “Ye are not come to the mount that might be touched,” to a palpable material mountain, to the blazing fire, the terrible sound of a trumpet, and the voice of birds. No longer in this visible, tangible form does the truth come; that day is past, and you may be glad that it has passed. Let not your faith go back to Sinai, but forward to the new covenant which deals only with the spiritual. But, some one says, “Why dwell upon such a commonplace fact that the essence of religion depends on nothing that is material?” Why? Simply because whatever our theories may be, our practice is often directly the reverse of them. Have we so learned that most difficult of lessons, how to use the material without being engrossed by it, while not despising, yet not to trust to it? Do we all so live by faith that if stripped of all—of the place consecrated to God’s service; if the times specially reminding us of Him; of the printed words so familiar to sight; of the spoken words communicating to us the subtle essence of others’ faith; of the forms of beauty and wisdom which are His voice to us, in the world around;

that thus stript we, shutting ourselves up in our own spirit, and gathering round us the only mantle left us—the mantle of inviolable faith in God—could stand and call on Him, left to us amid the void; bend low before the Father of our spirit, and cry, “Thee, O my all-sufficient good, I want, and Thee alone.” Have we such a conviction of His existence, His government, and the gradual working out of His plans for us, as to be independent of the material circumstances of our life? If the Sabeans fall on the oxen, the Chaldeans on the camels, and the wind from the wilderness slay sons and daughters with a blast, can we say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord?” If sore disease waste and torture and make vile the body, is there in despair the triumphant cry, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Oh, if our faith were more spiritual, rested less on the things that can be shaken, then at these times—and there are many of them—when the utter unreality of all that surrounds us here is borne in upon us; when we own, “Surely every man walketh in a vain show;” when the faces we love are gone, and the new ones that come to us are unlovely; when the scenes we have known seem shadowy and unreal; when in loneliness of spirit we are driven back upon ourselves, then our faith fixed on the Invisible, our love expressed in a passionate “Whom have I in heaven but Thee,” and our hope of one day seeing Him brighter for the surrounding darkness, we should calmly hear, “Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven;” for we

should add, "this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." Goethe, the great German poet, depicts the generations of men between the past and the future, as between two black curtains, where they stand bearing torches; cheated now by their own magnificent shadows, and now by the images which poets, statesmen, and tricksters have drawn on the curtain of the future, according to their fantastic humors, while no voice comes out of the darkness, but only a hollow echo answers the agonized questioner, as when one calls into an abyss. Thank God that is not the picture of a Christian. He knows what are the powers of the world to come. The invisible is not silent to his ears, but he hears real voices behind the veil; it is not dark to his eyes, but flames with light; his hands are not stretched out towards nothingness, but they take hold of God's everlasting arms; his feet stand on holy ground, and all along the pathway of life he finds,

"Earth crowned with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God."

In Schiller's drama of "Wallenstein," a maiden enters the chamber of her father's astrologer, and finds herself in a circle of colossal statues, kingly forms, representing planets.

"Each one in his hand a sceptre bore, and on his head a star,
And in the tower no other light was there,
But from these stars—all seemed to come from them."

And so the believer, seeing only by "the great light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," walks in the circle of the great intelligences fair that range above our mortal state; his faith grasping the unseen, clinging to the crowned King of saints, realizes amid all the shifting scenes of time that he rests on that which cannot be shaken. Yea, that even now he has received a kingdom in promise, and but waits for his majority to possess it fully and reign with Christ forever.

2. Forms of religious life may be shaken, but living faith in God, resulting in personal godliness, is abiding. Men are loth to see the forms in which religious life expresses itself from time to time, pass away. This is what troubled the Jew. The whole of the epistle shows how the priesthood and the sacrifices, so dear to the Jewish heart, were only temporary, destined to pass away before the great High-Priest, who should give Himself once a sacrifice for sins—and the Jew could not bear the thought of that. Now we all cling to forms of religious life, and for this reason they contain and convey truth, bring it before us so that we can realize and handle it. But just as Jewish ceremonials, which held for centuries, more or less successfully, the spirit of worship, so will it be with many human forms, in which generations as they pass express the truth and live and die. I see no reason why we should be startled at finding that that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. I cannot respect a thing simply because it is old. I would draw all possible lessons from the past, but to

drag the past into the present, or project it into the future, simply because it is the past, or to take the old skeleton and dress it up in the garments of the present, while there is no beating heart throbbing within, is the height of folly. Has it served its end? Has it reached the limit of its usefulness? if so, bury it decently, give it honorable entombment, but for the great active, living present, give us life and power and possibility, even though some may demean it because of its rosy youth. To see men clinging to old institutions, words and phrases, feeling sure that the same power must linger in them, pathetically iterating an old rallying cry, at sound of which no hosts, as of old, muster to the battle, is fully exceeded only by those who throw away the spirit with the forms, the body with the clothes, the kernel with the shell, and because the one has served its day, declare there is no power in the other. What we want to value is not the form of religious life, but the life itself. Christ came into this world to establish deep-seated personal religion. He came to create a personal relationship between man and his God. Indeed, I might almost say that Christ came to create the individual, for at the time of the advent, he can scarcely be said to have had an existence. Roman society, the great Roman world, was everywhere, but where was man? The colossal empire spanned the continents, but where was there a place within it which afforded even breathing room for man in his personal prerogatives, rights and liberties? There was no such place. Man was part of a great empire life—nothing more. And when the compassionate eyes

of Christ saw man, made in the image of God, broken, crushed, ruined under the dead weight of society, He wept. The Son of God did not touch society as such. He went straight to the individual. He spoke to him with a pathos that was creative, and detached him from humanity in the mass; brought him under His own personal influence, taught him, pardoned him, opened a spring of purity and blessedness in his heart, breathed into him His own spirit, and then sent him forth as His ambassador to the nations. The Christian man is Christ's chosen agent for breaking up the dead mass of society and regenerating the world. We need to ponder this truth in these days. We are getting so enveloped in the thick dust-clouds of philosophies and religious machineries and associations as to forget the man; forgetful of the fact that personal fidelity to our Lord is just as much a stronghold of Christianity in this age of freedom as it was in the periods when martyrs bled and died. It is only those churches that are alive with the power of personal godliness, which move with the times, put themselves upon the same level of thought with the men of their generation, are the most active in the living society around them, and bring a manhood filled with the spirit of Christ to bear straight down upon the manhood of the world, that will be able to pass unscathed, through the testing fire storm of the times, and strike the chants of the oncoming ages. Let a thousand old forms die, let all old rallying cries die, but let there be men and women clothed with the spirit of Christ, thoroughly converted, wholly conse-

crated to God, and the cause of truth shall never be shaken.

3. Symbolic forms of truth may be shaken, but the grand central truths of the Gospel are abiding. By central truths I mean the truths themselves as distinct from the theological forms which they may from time to time assume. Creeds are the concentered opinions of men in relation to the truths taught in God's Word. I would not like to say that these are complete and exhaustive for all time. Experience accumulates; new facts are discovered; society is thrown into new positions; new mental and spiritual forces come into play, and all mere symbols of truth may be moulded afresh while yet their spirit is the same; and I believe that the true conservatism of doctrine lies in broadening the platform in harmony with the aggressive enlightened spirit of the times, while maintaining fidelity to the great central verities of the faith. Nor does it argue weakness if the churches lay stress at one time on some particular form of truth that is not at another time brought prominently forward. It has always been the case that some truths needed to be expounded with special clearness and force. Now the Church has laid too much stress on external evidences, and men, hungry for truth to feed the soul, have complained that in asking for bread they have received a stone. Now there is danger of mere humanism, and anon an undue degradation of human nature. Now the emphasis is rightly laid on saving our own souls; again, we are as rightly reminded of the relation of Christianity to society and mankind. Now justifica-

tion is the lever that is to move a spiritually inert Christendom ; now, again, a loftier moral standard is needed. But because there may be restatements of truth—changes in the earthen vessels—shall we fly off at a tangent and say there is no divine truth at all? Nay! I have watched the sunlight on the sea at evening-time. Now there are shooting rays of crimson and gold; now an intense blush; now the water answers to the blue of the sky; now darkens into gray; now it is fretted into a thousand dimples; now the tips of the tiny breakers are crested by the toying wind; in one-quarter of an hour changes that no words can express have checkered the scene, and made the whole surface hardly for two consecutive seconds the same. Yet the sun shone steadily on and the sea paused not in its ebb and flow. And so, amid all changes, the divine power is working steadily in the human heart, many and varied as may be the clouds of human opinion which play across the history of human thought. In them all God is working; from them all educing a meaning, a result; by them all is teaching great lessons; through them all is leading to a great end. The things that can be shaken are removed, that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

Then, again, by the central truths of the Gospel I mean those that are supernatural, as distinct from those that have their origin in the sphere of nature or man's reason. These truths I know descend into the sphere of nature and reason, but in their origin they are distinctively supernatural. They are not so much

revelations from God, as God revealing Himself ; not so much lights coming down from heaven and held out to us by prophets and apostles, as Christ Himself coming down into humanity and passing on to the cross, there to be our light. Now, there are two things about the great truths of our religion that are inexpressibly dear to every Christian heart. The first is, that they all centre in Christ, and bring Him right down to us in our daily life struggle. He lived our life—died our death—and with His own footsteps marked out the great road of human duty, and while He lives in heaven to intercede, He lives on earth to guide, to shield, to bless. The things that are made are always shifting—moving upon the great line of change—but Christ is unchangeable, and is always near. He is the Christ of the world's yesterday and to-morrow, and emphatically the Christ of the world's to-day. He is knocking at the door of the world's heart *now*. He is as really present with you as the friend sitting there by your side. He could not better know all the tones and phases of your heart if He were vividly present among you. He is with you, entering with sufficient grace in your trade and business, as when walking across the sands of the lake in the sunrise He entered into the week-day thoughts of Jewish fishermen. With you with as real an interest in all your true joys as when he sat at the marriage feast ; with as real a succor in all your tribulations as when rough billows became smooth under His feet ; with a sympathy as deep and healing for you in your bereavements as He felt for Mary and Martha of

Bethany ; and with as deep a fountain of pity in His heart for men perishing in their sins as when He wept over doomed Jerusalem. The other things about these truths are their positiveness—the direct and unequivocal answers they give to all the great problems of life. There is a word very much used just now—a new word—a word you will not find in Webster or Worcester ; it is the word “Agnosticism.” The Agnostic is one who knows nothing. Of all matters which cannot be seen, or weighed, or handled, or measured, Agnosticism asserts complete ignorance. Ask it, “Is there a God ?” “I do not know,” is the answer. “Is there an immortal life ?” “I do not know.” “Is there a gracious providence ?” “I do not know.” “Is there a soul in man ?” “I do not know.” It rails off the largest and best field of our existence, and says it is a part of the unknowable. Byron’s words seem to be an accepted maxim—

“ Well didst thou speak, Athena’s wisest son,
All that we know is—nothing can be known.”

Oh, what a husk to feed a soul upon—a soul pressed with great problems, conscious of infinite wants, crying out for something to fill and satisfy it. Out of this helpless, hopeless ignorance how refreshing to turn to the positive words of Holy Scripture. Give me St. Paul in preference to Spencer and Greg and Frederick Harrison. “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” “We know that we have passed from death unto

life." "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This is the knowledge that is abiding. Faith anchored to Christ, and Christ abides. However the world may be shaken, whatever may be swept out of it, He abides in it from first to last, its unchanging Friend and almighty Redeemer; and He will not let it go till He has worked out upon its heart all the purposes of infinite wisdom and love. Yes, He abides; but we, His servants, do not abide. There is an autumn in cities as well as in fields. "Our fathers, where are they?" The standard-bearers fall, men die, the ages move on over their graves, but He stands in the midst of them to bless them as they pass. Our systems, like the generations, pass away. They are arches reaching but a little way over the abyss. But God's great way of salvation reaches clear across. See how grandly it spans the gulf, abutting, like a solid bridge, upon two solid eternities, throwing back all the storms of all the centuries as quietly as the granite cliff throws back the storms of ocean, bearing up the weight of the weary and heavy-laden generations till the last pilgrim in the long procession of Christian souls shall have passed into the "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Till then—aye, and longer—for when these long trains of material worlds, now sweeping through the silence of yonder heavens, shall have fallen from their orbits, that bridge shall remain unmoved. An immortal spirit coming forth from the light of God might take

his stand upon one of the battlements to survey the world in ruins. "For they shall perish, but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." All else goes from us; God in Christ only remains.

Brethren, the great want of the churches to-day, and of the Methodist Church, is a higher-toned personal religion. This was the idea of Methodism from the first. Our fathers had no wealth nor worldly power. They were not the founders of dynasties. But when days were dark and times were dull, and religion but a name, they taught and lived experimental piety. They numbered among themselves—though we have no Macaulay to celebrate their praise—more than one Horatius, who so well kept the bridge in the brave days of old—kept it not for himself alone, but for mankind. You need not be ashamed of your traditions. They do not cluster around great society, but they cluster around what is diviner, the enlightened conscience of the Christian man, and this sublime principle, self-forgetting, self-sacrificing, personal religion, the consecration of the entire being to God. May God put His Spirit into that principle afresh, and cause it to go ringing through the Church as a creative voice.

IV.

THE BODY OF CHRIST.

“Head over all things to the Church, which is His body; the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”—EPH. i. 22, 23.

THE text forms a part of an argument in which Paul is establishing the divine and mediatorial glory of Jesus Christ, and the rich benedictions that come to us by virtue of the relation He sustains toward us. And it is worthy of observation, how carefully he builds his argument, not on an isolated fact, but knits together in one the great truths of the Gospel; so perfect the intertexture of the whole, and so accurate the adjustment of the parts, that the omission of any one destroys the harmony of the whole; the text and context so complete in their connection that they involve the sum and substance of all Christian teaching. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.” “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” “Quickening you who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Nor does he leave the subject even with this full and graphic outline. He dwells on it, enamored of its beauty. He presents it in new forms, groups its elements in new combinations, insists again and again on our

helplessness, and again and again admonishes us that "By grace we are saved through faith;" "The exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe." He mounts up into heaven with Christ, whom God raised from the dead and set "at His own right hand in the heavenly places." And then the crowning glory of the whole, he adds, and so concludes his glowing argument, "And gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body : the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

Three things in the text claim our attention.

I. The Church is the body of Christ.

II. He is its Head over all things.

III. It is His fulness, even as He filleth all in all.

I. The Church is the body of Christ. We will not detain you with the minute analogies between a living body and the Church of Christ, but notice two or three general characteristics. And first, if you think what a body is, you learn that it is composed of living members, each of which, however, has no life in itself, but a life out of and above itself, all the members having one and the same life that is common to all. Take the hand—it lives, has feeling and motion, but not of itself. If it be severed from the arm, or if the myriad subtle threads of life, the nerves, be broken, then the hand no longer palpitates with quick touch and nimble energy. The eye lives, shines with the light of life, but that life is not in the eye. Remove it from the socket, or let the soul go hence, the eye,

indeed, is just the same, yet what is it? a dull, liquid lens, soon to waste into sad and loathly earth. So with every member of the body. Its life is beyond itself, within the body of which it is a part; and by that hidden higher life alone it fulfils its functions. So in the mystical body of Christ, every member of it lives, not by himself, but by the indwelling Spirit of that body, and the Lord is that Spirit. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Faith is the receiving of the Lord Jesus into the heart, and His entrance there is the quickening dawn of eternal life. "He that believeth in Him hath life," for he has received Him who is the spring and breath of life everywhere. And you will observe there is one life in each and all the members of the body. Diversities there may be in nature and in circumstances, but they all live in One, who is Christ. The members of this body are many, and endlessly diversified; but one spirit flashes through each, one life possesses each and fits it for its proper functions. The same life that brightens the eye and receives through it the picture of the world throughout, quivers in the lip, speeds lightning movements into the hand, and vibrates with the sharp touch of feeling. So, brethren, are we separate, different as are the members of our body, yet all of us are instinct and alive unto God by the presence and action of one Spirit, which is the Lord's. And hence it comes that these members of Christ being many are one body, for by one Spirit are we drawn into one and baptized into one body. From the mystery of the body, the soul quickening each organ and part and fitly framing

and sweetly according them to each other, we learn it is thus the Lord Jesus Christ who gives life to each member of His body, knits His living members into a higher fellowship of life, fashions and tunes them for the reciprocal services and vital sympathies of fellowship, and cements and roots them together by the mighty yet spontaneous harmonies of His own life. There is no unity but in life. Dead things moulder and separate into atoms; living things reveal the splendor and completeness of innumerable parts linked and growing together in that unspeakable unison, the unity of life. Such is the body of Christ, comprised of many members, none having life in themselves, partaking of the common life of Christ.

2nd. Again, a body is a living organization, in which each part has a specific place, and holds a definite relation to every other part, and in which all the parts act with mutual and sympathetic influences upon each other. You cannot tear one member off without affecting all the rest. The Church of Christ, too, is not a disorganized chaos in which men are crowded together, bearing no relation to each other, and no definite place to fill. There must be government and administration in the Church, that order may be there; and there must be diversities of operations of office and work, so that each member may find his proper place and do a work suited to his gifts. The members of the human body all conspire to develop and strengthen that body, but the work of each is different. Every member is not an eye, or a foot, or a hand; but every member holds its right

place, and contributes its share to the good of all the rest. Now, the practical point just here is, that to have life from Christ is to be a member of His Church, and to partake of its life; but to live there is to work—to work in that definite sphere and office, humble or exalted, in which, according to the judgment of the Church, I may best promote the good of the whole body, and aid in the fulfilment of its mission. And then, from this you rise into a higher truth. In the human body there are ceaseless currents of sympathy, which so participate in each other's state, that they sicken or strengthen with each other. Health is just the music of these ten thousand chords blending in unison, and disease is the jar and discord which one false note creates. No one member of the body can suffer without all suffering with it, and no one can be honored without all rejoicing. And this is the image which Paul gives of the Church of Christ. In this spiritual body, we are not members with one another, simply because our names are on the same church book, or sit near each other in the same sanctuary; but, as Paul says, in another place, we are members one of another—we live in each other's life. No member of the Church can be isolated from his brethren, or can be independent of them; he gives and receives. They play on one another as constantly as the flow of blood and nervous energy within the body; and as they get they give. Now, this mutual sympathy in the Church is to be viewed under two aspects. There is, first, that influence which is unconscious, constant and necessary; and, second, that which is conscious

and intentional. Now, of the first, unconscious influence, we all feel its power. There are some Christians, and the tone of their voice, the grasp of their hand, or their smile, seems to touch and warm the heart, like the light of spring and the blossoming of flowers. To meet them in the street is to have the breathing of the better world. Have you never known such? To know them, to talk with them when you are in trouble, is like entering from a dark, wintry night, a nice, warm, cozy room. And then, again, there are some men whose presence chills you, like the drizzle and dreariness of a bleak November. In almost every Church you will find some men who have an elevating, inspiring force, like a gladsome breeze that bears you upwards, and others are like icebergs. Oh, do not forget that an unconscious but inevitable influence is going out from you, and, as the fire breathes warmth and the ice breathes cold, your heart, as it is fire or frost, breathes in like manner on all around you. Not for yourself you live. If you have won strong faith and calm hope by the wrestling of prayer, or the discipline of trial, your gain is not your own alone. Your enthusiasm kindles some other body's faith, and they are made strong by your endurance. But then, if you have grown worldly, and selfish, and unbelieving; if the mildew of spiritual negligence has clouded your experience; if some evil passion has nestled in your heart, or some power of sin has wasted your soul, that deadly thing is not shut up within yourself. It has checked the Church's zeal; it has crept like a wintry fog over your home and your brethren. That

sin, lying in your spirit, goes out from you as a pestilence, and sheds its poison on those nearest you. But then, there is also the influence that is conscious and intentional. We must have a definite place in the Church. We must have as an object of thought what the apostle describes as "the same care one of another." The welfare of the whole body of which we are members must be our solicitude. With what talents we have, many or few, we must labor for God, and so prove ourselves members of Christ's body.

3rd. This leads me to another truth. "Ye are Christ's body." Why does a body exist to and for us? Is it not to utter the mind, do the will, and reveal the character? The body is the glass through which the mind appears, the instrument by which it works. And just for this end does the Church exist, to do the will of Christ and accomplish the work which He has gone to heaven to superintend. And how vast that work! Not simply to heal the sick, comfort the sorrowful, but the actual redemption of men from the curse of sin. For that He labored in the days of His flesh, and for that, with ceaseless quest and care, He still works in His Church. To speak for Jesus, to work for Jesus, if need be to suffer for Jesus—this is our vocation and this our honor. And this Church, and any other Church, only proves itself the body of Christ when it works for Christ, does His will, reveals His character.

II. Christ is the head of the Church.

1st. He is head over all things to his Church, by His

almighty sovereignty and power. Read the preceding verses—God hath “set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.” The supremacy of Christ is here set forth to be of the most extensive, powerful, and glorious kind. He is at the head of all principality and power. The sovereignty of the whole creation is committed to Him. It extends over all places. Over earth, with her wide domain; over heaven, with its millions of teeming worlds; and over hell, with all its depth and gloom. It extends over all things—whether “things present or things to come.” It extends over all persons—whether men, or angels, or devils. And this universal supremacy is the abiding prerogative of Christ. He has no successor or heir. He is King forever. “He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”

2nd. He is the head of His church, as He is the source of its life. He imparts life, strength and motion to it. As the head is the centre of the nerves, which spread themselves over the human body like an intricate network of telegraph wires, along which are sent the sensations and influences of life to the finger-tips; so Christ is the centre and seat of those living influences which vivify, move, actuate and bless the Church. He is the source, the origin of the life of the Church. By Him that life is preserved. Through Him it is developed and perfected. It ever there was a period when these points should stand out definitely and

prominently, that period is now, when so many are going back to the imperfections of Judaistic days; when men, instead of preaching, are performing, doffing and donning their robes, marching and counter-marching, while the low-voiced song and the mumbled chant die away among the arches of the high-groined roof. Woe awaits the day when the simplicity of the Gospel is superseded by the elaborate ritual, and the spirituality of the Gospel is lost amongst the mazes of countless formalities, and the life of the Church is smothered out under a heap of beautiful rubbish, made up of remnants of Judaism and Popery. Let Christ be exalted, instead of setting up a cross over an altar. Let the Church seek for the light of the Spirit and the Word, instead of burning tapers and candles to the insult of the broad daylight and God's bright lamp in heaven, and let her remember that her existence and power and growth are through Him, for He is the head over all things to His Church.

3rd. Christ is the head of the Church, as He governs and controls it. As a governor, His authority is founded on right and maintained by power. There is a great difference between authority and power. There may be authority where there is no power, and there may be power where there is no authority. A usurper, backed by a large army, has driven the lawful king into exile. The usurper has power, but no authority; the king has authority, but no power. In Christ the two things meet. He has authority and He has power; and His authority is grounded on right. Right arising from eminence of nature and power. Right founded

on the fact that He is the author of our being—our natural being as men; our spiritual being as Christians. Right arising from the great fact of redemption, and right arising from our free election of Him to be our head and chief, for we have freely said to Him, "O Lord, our Lord, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us, but we will only make mention of Thy name." And as Christ's authority is founded on right, He exercises that authority by making and administering laws to His Church. I say the authority to make laws, for the Church resides only in Christ. These laws are already made; are contained in the New Testament; are final enactments of divine wisdom, and all additions and subtractions are fearfully denounced. They are of different kinds—laws for the feelings, called precepts; laws for belief, called doctrines; laws for actions, again called precepts. And then Christ's authority is shown in the administration of law. In the administration of law He proves His power by punishing the obstinate law-breaker and by pardoning the penitent law-breaker. And here we must protest against the invasion of those rights, which belong absolutely to Christ. Whatever attempts to rule my conscience, in whatever way or on whatever ground, whether it be king or church or pope or council, they usurp the rights of the Lord Jesus.

4th. He is the Head of the Church, as He represents it. The natural head represents the body, and for this end is endowed with many excellencies: the eye that sees, the ear that hears, and the tongue that speaks. And Christ represents the Church, a work for which

He is fitted. His dignity lifts Him at once to the level of this great work, and His capacities for it correspond to the dignity. He has been styled the Word of God, the incarnated expression of God's love to man; and we may style Him the Word of the Church, the glorified expression of the Church's faith and love toward God. And is not His devotion to the interests of the Church, which is His body, such as to warrant the persuasion that it is impossible to charge Him with unfaithfulness in the performance of His work? His attention never wearies and His heart never wavers, while "He is able to save unto the uttermost those who come unto God by Him." "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Well may the Church exclaim, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord."

III. The Church is Christ's fulness.

The fulness of Him that filleth all in all." As Barnes remarks, the exact idea presented by these words is obscure. And then he gives the sense according to his notion, that the Church is the completion

or filling up of Christ's power and glory. But as Ellicott observes, the idea of Christ receiving completion in His members, implies restrictions little according with other declarations in this chapter; and I am disposed to adopt his interpretation that the Church is the recipient of the plenitude or fulness of Him who filleth all things with all things. The fulness of His wisdom guiding her by His Spirit into all saving knowledge; the fulness of His power, that weak as she may be, and little thought of by the world, yet the gates of hell may never prevail against her; the fulness of His grace, that her children may be nurtured and sustained against all conflicts. What but His fulness made fishermen and publicans mighty to break down strongholds and overthrow high places? What but His fulness made the company of the despised Nazarenes victorious over the might and majesty of Rome? What but His fulness has sustained the pure, life-giving stream against all the currents of earth and hell, and makes its track still visible in every land by the fresh emerald verdure of its charity? The tracks of human conquerors are forgotten while the blood is yet upon their feet. The science that could rear the pyramids could not perpetuate the names of their projectors. The marble moulders and the brass corrodes in utter mockery at man's attempts at immortality; but the Church of the living God, receiving the fulness of the wisdom, and power, and grace of Christ, endures for evermore. She will triumph in His triumphs; she will be exalted in His exaltation; the rays of glory that encircle His

brow will enhance her glory ; and when He shall consummate all things by the entire overthrow of evil, that will be the signal for the great hallelujah shout from the great multitude whose voice shall be like the sound of many waters, because the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready ; and there she will be, as St. John writes, when the angel that talked with him said, "Come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," and he saw her "having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."

And now, my brethren, how many of you acknowledge the supremacy, the headship of Christ ? Remember the question is not between headship and no headship. It is a question between the headship of Christ and the headship of the spirit of darkness. It is a choice between the dark, cruel reign of the devil, and the mild, benignant reign of Jesus. I do not ask you how you have chosen in the past, but I ask you how you are choosing now. I want you to understand that this is a matter in which you are compelled to act, and especially so when it is presented to your notice. Oh, the vast importance of this moment when every soul here is either accepting or rejecting Christ ! Do you hesitate how you shall decide ? Can it be possible that a man wavers here when eternity is in the balance ? Are motives needed to incite the soul ? Would you then attain the honor that is unstained and fadeless ? You attain it by accepting Christ. Would you open to yourselves stores of wealth ? You

do it by accepting Christ—"riches above what earth can grant, and lasting as the mind." Would you plant yourself in a position of unassailable security? You do it by accepting Christ. But if these do not draw, "Thou, by Thy threatenings move."



V.

THE SWELLINGS OF JORDAN.

“If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?”—JER. xii 5.

THE text is God's answer to the complaints of Jeremiah while suffering from the contempt and contumely of the men to whom he had been sent with words of affectionate counsel and earnest warning. He had commenced his ministry in Anathoth—his native town—an obscure place in the tribe of Benjamin. His brethren, instead of welcoming his words, treated them with cruel neglect, and the prophet's spirit fell within him. In this chapter he pours out his complaint to God, wondering why these wicked contemners of His word prospered while he met with confusion and disaster; and this is the answer to his questionings: “If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?” Running with footmen refers to the practice in the East of employing couriers and foot-posts for the transmission of despatches. Contending with horses points to the office of those whose duty it was to precede Eastern chariots

on foot. The land of peace was the quiet of the prophet's own dwelling-place, and the swelling of Jordan the annual rise of that river, caused by the melting of the snows on Lebanon, causing it to overflow its banks. The text, then, is as if God had said, "If, in a trial of speed with men—your natural equals—you have been beaten, how will you contend with horses—your born superiors in fleetness? Or if, in the sunny and quiet times of Palestine—when the Jordan frolics along its channels or eddies in its pools, and belts the whole land with the garniture of its summer beauty—if, even then, you have complaints of hardships, what will you do when that same Jordan shall chafe, and rush, and overflow, driving the wild beast from his covert, whelming the harvest field, and sweeping away your homes with untimely flood?" Now, the moral of this pictorial question to us is, If the lesser evils of life are too much for you, how will you cope with the greater? or, if you are unequal to meet the dispensations of time, how can you bear the awards of eternity? and if you are troubled with the pangs of conscience and the disquiet of unforgiven sin, how can you grapple with death and confront the heart-searching Judge upon His throne? You see, then, at once how broad is the scope of the general principle embodied in these words. Let us note a few of its suggestive lessons.

1. Private trials of life.

So true is the Scripture declaration that man is born to trouble, that if his condition does not produce it, his very nature and disposition will. It is so legitimately

human that we go out and borrow, if it does not come unasked. No palace door shuts out the inevitable ills of fancy or reality. No cushioned luxury satiates desire till it says, "I want no more." A zephyr will be a hardship to a life that has no hurricanes, and his spirit will quail to mere vexations who might, under other circumstances, be strong to cope with solid, massive trials. Thus it is that little griefs corrode us when there are no great ones to buffet us, and we are wearied running with footmen—overcome by trials that spring out of ourselves and our commonest life. How, then, shall we contend with horses—the real, grave, earnest trials that put all our manhood to the test? Now, this text speaks to all who are given to indulge a repining spirit, who fret and worry under the yoke that is laid upon them. And the thoughts it suggests are of great practical value. For example, it bids us think how much worse matters might have been or yet may be with us. You grumble because of domestic vexations, but they may be supplanted by domestic woes. You chafe under mercantile inconveniences, but they may give way to mercantile disaster. You complain of ailments that serious pain may cause to be forgotten. There will come a time when your heart will be torn with its bereaved love, and that darkened chamber where you watch by the bed of the dying will be an apt picture of your darkened life. And that dying chamber will be to you also your own dying place, and next to the grief for the friends already lost will be the grief that you are now going to leave the rest behind. Amid the faintness and irri-

tability of your last sickness your former troubles will all seem mean, and your vexation shameful and unreasonable. What are the passing inconveniences of life to the solemn woe of the burial service in which you must stand by the open grave and see your husband, wife or child laid out of your sight forever? What are these anxieties, common to all, to that heart absorption with which you will watch for the last breath of a loved one, or the loneliness with which you will pace the desolated chamber and your unconscious lips shall call his name and get no answer? These greater griefs will come; and if you are so tried and overwhelmed by the rippling waves of trouble, what will you do in the swelling of Jordan? Why should a living man complain? And then again, it is well to compare our trials with those of others. The most accumulated of distresses and the strangest combination of griefs will not make us the worst off in the world. It is an old but true saying, that "one-half the world don't know how the other half live." I have often wished that I could take some whom I have heard complaining, like the prophet, in a land of comparative peace, to scenes that I am often called to witness, that in the presence of overmastering disaster and sorrow they should learn lessons of gratitude that they are no worse off than they are. But again, may we not look at present trial as an opportunity of personal advantage? In trial we get a right estimate of worldly things. The holy Rutherford once said: "The Lord has taught me more in nine months in Aberdeen jail than in twelve years of my ministry." From the greatest prosperity may

come the greatest curse. Says the prophet, "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees; he hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity, therefore his taste remaineth in him, and his scent is not changed." To be joyous in tribulation is greater grace than to be zealous in the time of strength. And then may we not also, in the midst of all trials, anticipate the hour of complete deliverance. That is a beautiful couplet of some poet:

"The soul's dark cottage, battered and betrayed,
Lets in new light through chinks which time has made."

The glimpse of the life everlasting shines brightly by the light of the night-lamp. The creaking cords of the frail tent remind us of the everlasting habitations that await us, and in restless moments of pain we are soothed by the promise of that home in which the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick." The memory of those who have gone before us, and the sufferings they have endured, should stimulate us that we faint not. "These are they who have come up out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb." God had one Son without sin, but never one without sorrow. Oh, be of good cheer, tempest-tossed one. You shall yet cast off all earth's calamities, and be clothed upon with garments pure and white.

2. Difficulties in the service of God.

Take the case of a man who has recently fallen into known open sin. The inducements were not

powerful in themselves, but the unhappy victim was ensnared almost without resistance, perhaps from want of vigilance or through desperate carelessness. Yea, perhaps the circumstances were favorable for a triumph over the powers of darkness. A few urgent cries for deliverance would have been successful. Escape was close at hand ; but alas, the effort was not made, or feebly made, and now the memory of that sin haunts the conscience, destroys the peace, and embitters all the joys of life. "Thou shouldst have smitten five or six times," said the prophet to Joash ; "then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it." Languid resistance only courts the soul's enemies. Falling thus easily into the wiles of Satan, what will become of you when he shall come in like a flood ? How will you endure when resistance must be unto blood, striving against sin ? In that hour, unless the heart be established by grace, you will be driven like chaff from the threshing-floor. Or, take the case of the young man who, while yet in his father's house, sheltered by the sanctions of a Christian home, has fallen into sinful habits, what will become of him when all these restraints are removed, and when a thousand inducements to evil open to his view as he traverses the streets of the great city ? If he could not withstand incitements to sin when all around was on the side of God and virtue, how will he withstand the solicitations of godless companions ? He will become a poor waif of society, the sport of every evil passion, the prey of every destroying lust. Oh, contend with the footmen and horses, resist sin now,

cultivate a good character, keep out of the meshes of temptation; be true, virtuous, godly, in your youth, else in middle life and old age the swellings of Jordan will overcome you, and you will be whirled about in its eddies and be lost forever.

3. Troubles that haunt the unconverted.

Yes, I say troubles that haunt the unconverted. You that are unconverted, seem to laugh and enjoy yourselves, but life is not all enjoyment. You have your fears and troubles. There is wormwood in the cup; there is an asp in the flower you clasp. It must be so. God has placed in every man's heart a great prophetic witness, to tell him of his sins. Conscience is God's viceroy over the realm of the human spirit. Man may dethrone it by excessive guilt, and violate and dishonor it in ten thousand ways. But conscience was born to a throne in the human bosom, and a throne it will have, if not in this life, then in the next; in this life for his salvation, or if not, then in the next for his deathless torment. When conscience speaks, its voice is always kingly. Even though you chain it, you tremble at the majesty of its expostulations. It is God's eye. It sees your life and reads your heart. It is God's voice counselling your understanding. It is God's power chastising your guilt with stings. Every sin you commit, open or secret, yea, every thought of sin, calls forth its indignant reprimand. You carry it within you, and you are made to know it is within you. Go where you will, you have this inseparable companion and admonisher

of your spirit, pointing always toward the forsaken road of duty. In the Church, conscience bars the point of God's truth and fastens it in your heart. And even if you sleep upon the divine message, conscience flies in your face when you awake. If you carelessly abstain from the services of God's house, conscience pricks you till you writhe. When you neglect the closet and its prayers, conscience complains through all the chambers of your graceless heart. Sinner, do I not speak the truth when I say that in all your life of alienation from God, you carry this clog to your enjoyment, that yours is a life of sin? You would be happy if you could not remember that you are guilty; but remembering this, what a mockery of happiness is a life like yours. Rich you may be in this life, but poverty-stricken for eternity; honored in men's estimation, but miserably vile in His who is no respecter of persons; wise in human lore, ruinously blind in divine things; just in your dealings with men, but defrauding the God who made you; free from all worldly stain, but guilty of the blood of your own soul. You feel this as often as you reflect. Your life's worst troubler is your own conscience. Your pang of pangs is your self-inflicted wound. Here is trouble born *of* and *in* you. "In a land of peace wherein you trusted you are wearied." And now let me ask the searching question of the text, "How will you contend with horses? What will you do in the swelling of Jordan?" For there is coming a time when these pungent pains of your soul will seem like the brushing of an insect's wing compared with the searchings

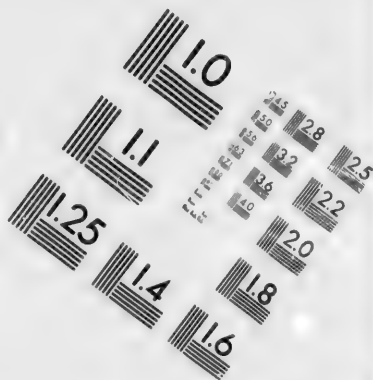
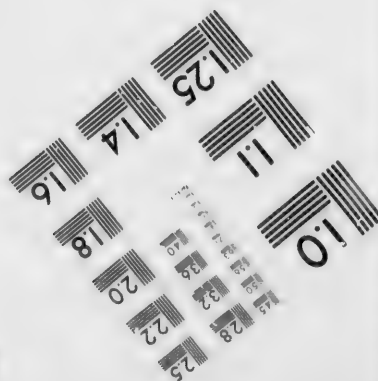
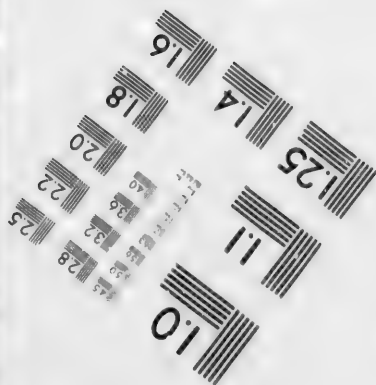
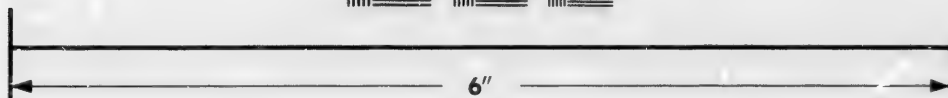
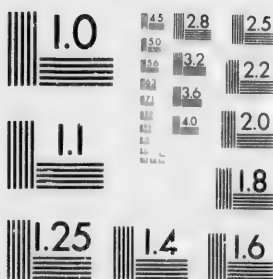


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of heart you must then endure. The time is coming when your soul shall be laid bare to the eye of the whole world, and its character will be read aloud by Him who gave your conscience a part of His own power. He will expose your open and your secret sins, and bring your whole life to the dreadful ordeal of the judgment. And what wilt thou say when He shall punish thee? In that ceasing of forbearance and swelling forth of justice, what wilt thou do? When the time for prayer is ended and gone, and the Holy Spirit is returned to God's bosom, never to visit you again, and the day of grace has had its nightfall, and retribution gleams before you through a starless eternity; when the wrath of the Lamb has taken the judgment seat, and the love of the Lamb turns away from you to the saved, O ye who are rejecting Christ now, how can your hearts be strong then? How can you contend with your God? You cannot contend, for we know who will then call upon the rocks and hills to fall upon them and shield them from His piercing eye whose one look is a pang that never dies, and the waving of whose hand is the token of endless despair. Oh, heed your conscience now! You are wearied with it, I know, because you cannot deny its justice. As you love your own souls, and as you would fear to carry an unforgiven heart to your death-bed and to the judgment, begin to pray, fly to the Cross, and the blood that your sins drew forth from His side shall be your peace amid the swellings of Jordan.

4. To those not profiting by favorable providence we may say: What precious opportunities for making

peace with God you have. Sunday after Sunday finds you in the sanctuary, and we are thankful that it is so. But is there not more than that to be accomplished by you—the salvation of your soul? And at any moment your privileges may be removed; and it will be an eternal catastrophe should they leave you unsaved. “Behold *now* is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation.” One of the later Latin poets has an apologue on the missing of opportunity worthy of our attention. A visitor to the studio of Phidias saw among the statues an unknown object. It had winged feet, to show how swiftly it flies; its features were covered with hair, because it is rarely identified; it was bald behind, because, when once gone, none can seize it; and closely following at its heels was a slavish form. The first figure was Opportunity, the last Despair. Men miss the goddess Opportunity, and fall into the arms of Despair. Mark, Opportunity is winged, passing swiftly away, and is followed by Despair. Oh, seize opportunity now. You have no time to lose. And how, if you persist in delay, will you do in the swellings of Jordan? All must die—whether in the green of budding childhood, the buoyancy of happy youth, the vigor of manhood, or the decrepitude of age. Human skill and prudence may delay the hour, but it is only a brief respite. In a few short years, and who of all this congregation will be living? The voice that now addresses you will be silenced; these pews will be occupied by other people. You will have passed away. You will go down to the grave—from thence to judgment. You know not

when you will die; you know not how you will die. You are thinking of death as away in the distance; it may be very near. You are calculating on a long sickness; you may fall in a moment. You are exposed to accident as well as disease. One of the pastors of this city told me the other day of a gentleman in this city, a commercial traveller, who was in his church a few Sunday evenings ago, and heard a sermon from the words, "Prepare to meet thy God." The word reached the young man's heart. The next day he called at the pastor's residence, expressed his conviction of sin, and joined the church. Last week that gentleman suddenly died. What a mercy that he had at last commenced to seek the Lord. And you may be suddenly called to go down into the swellings of Jordan. Why, then, live another moment in an unconverted state? Your soul is too precious to lose. Oh, I beseech you to seek the Lord now, for there is but a step between thee and death. Don't trust to a death-bed repentance. It is almost certain ruin. "How wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan?" No human hand can sustain thee then. No eloquence, no expostulations, no tears can bribe death. You know right well that there is no preparation for death but faith in Christ. And Christ is calling you, pleading with you, exhorting you this very Sabbath evening. He waits to save you. Oh, do not refuse! Christian believer, how wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan? Fear not. You may be timid, you may have a fear of dying; but that which you have committed to the keeping of the Saviour shall be kept secure amid the

waters of death. I have been reading the "Pilgrim's Progress" again, and I have been struck by that fine passage in which the dreamer describes the experience of the pilgrims when they came to the end of their journey. Ignorance is ferried over by Vain Hope, only to discover that there is a way to hell even from the gates of heaven. When Mr. Fearful's turn comes, the waters were lower than ever they were known to be before. Mr. Honest is helped over by Good Conscience. And Mr. Standfast, from the midst of the stream, says: "This river has been a terror to many; yea, the thoughts of it also have often frightened me, but now methinks I stand easy; my foot is fixed upon that on which the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the covenant stood while Israel went over Jordan." Mr. Ready-to-Halt throws away his crutches. Mr. Despondency cries, "Farewell, night—welcome, day!" and his daughter, whose name was Much-Afraid, went over singing. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. Oh, religion is the comfort of life and it takes away the sting of death! Christians do well in the swellings of Jordan. But the sinner—oh, what a dark hour is death to him! And will you run any risks in this matter? Ye know not what hour the Son of man shall come; will ye sport on the brink of the eternal world? Alas, alas, that ye are beguiled by the tempter's voice as he whispers, Time enough yet. I appeal to the aged who are unconverted. You must soon pass away. White locks and feeble steps are the sure precursors. For years you have lived in sin. Oh, retrace your steps! Christ will take even

the fragments of your life. "Come, let us reason together ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as wool ; though red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow." I appeal to those who have the heavy cares of life upon them—who are living only for the world—what if suddenly the Master should say, "Give an account of thy stewardship," and you should have to present a record of a life devoted only to yourself and sin ? I appeal to the young. Full of promise, and dreaming of long life, you are refusing the claims of Christ upon your heart. And I appeal to the backslider. "How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan ?" I appeal to the children of many prayers. To all I cry, "Prepare to meet thy God !"



VI.

THE DEATH OF MOSES.

"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."—DEUT. xxxiv. 5, 6.

OF all the world's great men Moses is the greatest. As the historian of creation; the legislator, not of a class, but of the world; the conqueror of Egypt's proud monarch; the founder of the most glorious commonwealth that ever appeared on the stage of time, and as an eminent type of the Son of God, his name stands first on the roll of fame, figures in all literature, floats in the traditions of the heathen, is a household word in Christendom, is dear to all the good of earth, and mingles with the song of heaven. The text to-night brings us to the last hours of this great man's earthly life. In the plains of Moab he delivers his valedictory to the assembled tribes, then wends his way alone up Mount Nebo until he reaches Pisgah, its highest point, from which he could command a view of the land of promise. "And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan." The hour of communion past, he lay down upon the rocks to die. Poets have sung of the mountain cloud which night hung around him as his shroud, and of the passing thunder as his funeral dirge, but I am inclined to think there

was neither cloud nor storm, and that the only motion heard amid the impressive stillness was the gentle wafture of the angel's wing on which his spirit rose into the opening heaven. His death was but the soul parting with its fleshly vestment, and putting on the robe of light. "And the Lord buried him." No mortal hand scooped the grave, no mortal voice chanted the requiem, no sculptured stone marked his resting-place; but as the whole earth . . . the sepulchre of illustrious men, his fame is graven on the tablet of universal remembrance, and will survive local inscriptions and marble monuments. I might use this expressive piece of history to illustrate the last privileges of the good—the unfolding of the heavenly to the spiritual eye of the Christian in death—but I have other and more practical purposes in view. I ask you to consider the text as illustrative and suggestive of certain great facts concerning life.

I. Life shortened by sin.

II. Life ending in the midst of labor and the most blooming earthly prospects.

III. Life apparently a failure, finding its compensation.

I. Life shortened by sin.

Let me direct your attention to the historical connections of this thought. The congregation of Israel were murmuring for water at Meribah, in the desert of Zin. "And the Lord spake unto Moses," etc. (Num. xx. 7, 8.) Thirty-nine years before that a rock had

been smitten at Horeb by the command of God, and forthwith came an abundant supply of water, the smitten rock being, as an apostle intimates, a type of Christ, who, being smitten for our offences, caused the water of life and salvation to flow for the refreshment of every sinner applying for the blessings of peace and pardon. But on this second occasion God did not command Moses and Aaron to *smite*, but to *speak* to the rock, for the purpose, it might be, of showing that even insensible nature was ready to give a response to the commands of the Creator, which rational creatures often refuse to give. But there were other and weightier reasons, as we shall see presently.

"And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice, and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also." (Num. xx. 10, 11.) Must we, Moses and Aaron, fetch you water? Was this sanctifying the Lord in the eyes of the people? Nay, was it not a lifting-up of themselves, to the exclusion of the Lord Jehovah, from the eyes of the congregation? Aye, and was there not another and a more serious evil? You will observe that in making the tabernacle Moses had been taught to attend in the minutest particulars to the directions given him, and neither to go beyond nor to fall short in the least degree of what God had commanded. Everything connected with the tabernacle and everything connected with God's dealings with Israel was

typical ; and if, as we have seen in the first instance, the smitten rock typified the smitten Saviour, "who bare our sins in His own body on the tree," it was contrary to the very intention and spirit of the type that the rock should be smitten again. "Christ was once offered a propitiation for the sins of the whole world," and after His one offering there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. He is not to be smitten again for our offences. Those who would now receive communications of grace and mercy are not to look to the necessity of a repetition of His sacrifice, but they are to speak to him ; and, my brethren, it is one of the most comforting facts of our faith that He may be spoken to—that prayer, loud as the sound of many waters, or low and feeble as the whisper that trembles on dying lips, is distinct to His ear, and will open His hand, from which He is ready to pour a tide of blessings, the richest that can emanate from a throne on which is seated a God of love. Moses smote the rock. In that he sinned, and hence the sentence, "Ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." My brethren, I find in this sentence God's protest against sin—to me the most solemn protest in all the Bible. The old world was swept away by the angry waters of the Deluge ; Sodom and Gomorrah smoked beneath the avenging fires of God ; Nadab and Abihu, with their broken censers, lay before the sanctuary, scorched by the lightning of His displeasure ; the bones of thousands of Israel lay whitened by the sirocco of the desert ; Jerusalem reeled and tottered to her fall, while famine, sword and pesti-

lence consumed her people. But often and fiercely did these provoke the Lord, and, with impious pride, approach in single combat against the Mighty One. But Moses was the meekest of men. His countenance, it may be, still shone with celestial radiance when he descended from communing with God upon the mountain ; and, so far as I know, there is not another registered instance in which he displayed the least deficiency of faith, and therefore when I read this sentence I seem to hear from it more distinctly than from devouring waves, and charred ruins, and bleaching bones, and desolated cities, the voice of warning and entreaty, "Oh, do not this abominable thing which I hate." And if there is any one here to-night who imagines that sin under certain circumstances does not move the wrath of the Almighty, who fancies that what he may choose to regard as but a slight divergence from the right, calls down no penal visitation—in one word, if any one would hope to deal with God on any ground other than that of simple obedience to His commands and trust in His promises, I send him to behold Moses—eager to enter Canaan, yet expiring on the margin of the promised inheritance, because he smote the rock to which he was commanded but to speak. And with this sentence before us, have we not all need to breathe forth the prayer of the nineteenth Psalm, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults ; keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins ; let them not have dominion over me ?"

II. Life ending in the midst of labor. "His eye was not dim nor his natural force abated." Full of vigor

and strong to labor he must have keenly felt as he stood on Pisgah that his work was in an unfinished state. The tribes were to be conducted over Jordan; Jericho, with its massive defences, was to be taken; the aborigines were to be exterminated, the land divided among the tribes, and the theocracy fully organized. The land of promise, which had often passed before his imagination, buoying up his spirit amid the trials and vexations of the wilderness, now expanded in all the charms of reality before him. But he must die. Into those lively scenes he may not enter, and the work which he had hoped to finish must be given to another. My brethren, is it not thus still? Men for the most part die in the midst of labor and bright prospects of earthly good. Here and there you will find a shock of corn fully ripe, and waiting for the gatherer to take it in; and once in a while you will find one that seems to be more than ripe, the grain falling on the ground. But most are taken in the green—sap flowing through all the channels, and vigor in the stalk. The farmer leaves his field half ploughed, the artist dies with unformed figures on the canvas, the tradesman is cut down in the midst of his merchandise, the statesman is arrested with undeveloped political measures on his hands, and ministers depart with many schemes of instructive thought and plans of usefulness but nicely commenced. Now, these thoughts are full of important lessons.

(1) If men thus die in the midst of labor, they should be cautious as to the work pursued. There are trades, professions, and departments of secular action that are

lucrative but unrighteous—and it would be terrible to die in the midst of unholy labor. To transact a business, to deal in anything on which God's blessing cannot be invoked, and which cannot in all respects answer to the requirements of the Divine law, is to endanger the soul and barter it for gain.

(2) Men should be active and diligent in the prosecution of an honest calling. God never intended life to be a merry playground, or luxurious dormitory. He represents it, not by the zoophyte, anchored to a rock, able to do nothing but grow and twirl its feelers and fold them up again, and knowing no variety except when the receding tide leaves it in the daylight, or the returning waters plunge it into the green depths again; but He represents it by the busy bee and industrious ant. No man, indeed, rich or poor, has a right to so bow over his desk or till, ledger or counter, helm or anvil, as to lose sight of the grave, the cross, and the judgment-seat. Still the Gospel is the enemy of idleness. "Not slothful in business, serving the Lord," is the characteristic of the Christian. The Almighty Feeder lays toil on the guests He feeds as the condition and tenure of His bounty. "Study to be quiet and do your own business and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; and if any man will not work, neither let him eat."

(3) Men should be careful that their labors sustain a proper relation to God. Daily labor should be made a means of grace. Every secular act should express and sanction, or rather strengthen, those great moral influences over which death has no power. In another

land we are to be crowned kings before God ; but in this we are only *servants*, stewards of God's manifold bounties. Each fragment of time, each splinter of property, each moiety of influence, has the King's imprint and superscription, "To God the things that are God's." Avocations the most laborious and harassing may be wafted into the spirit of heaven. Piety haunts not pulpits and closets and sanctuaries alone, but walks as no careless or curious stranger through all man's scenes of care and toil. The cause of God needs not only that men and women be Sabbath-keeping and church-going, but that they worship God at their daily tasks, at the hearth, the counter, the home or warehouse. God's service implies just principles of secular action, a regard to God's will and work, in business and devotion, in earning and bestowing property.

(4) Men should be careful to recognize the relation of the present to the future. That is a most solemn relation. It is a more solemn thing to live than many of you realize. There is a grandeur and a dignity about this present life that we are apt to overlook. We look around us, and everything is in a state of flux. Hovel and palace alike crumble. Wealth piled high as mountains is dissolved into dust. Decay consumes the works of genius ; old age dries up the voice of eloquence ; mould touches the canvas ; chariots of triumph are broken ; armies of power disappear, and the breath of God passes in anger over the seas, and vessels freighted down with the treasures of the earth and with the richer freight of human hearts, are swept

like bubbles from the deep. All history is only a succession of epitaphs on the greatness that has passed. And then, when we come down to humble life, what is it? To toil that we may live, and to live that we may toil; brief hours of joy broken up by trials; to sow and reap, to buy and sell; to rack the mind and task the heart, till by-and-by the fitful fever is quieted in the grave. And is that all? Nay; but behind all that transient scaffolding is rising an immortal fabric. Parallel with the outward goes on a corresponding inward life; and while the outward perishes, the inward, be it good or bad, is eternal. Holiness will remain undimmed when the light of the stars shall have expired, and sin will wear the thunder scar of God for evermore. And be it remembered that every act of this present life is giving strength to something good or bad within us. You may have seen the dry bed of some river whose channel has been changed. The waters no longer flow between the banks. They have passed away. Yet there are still the shelves of sand, and there are the rocks worn smooth and round by the constant motions of the waters, and there they will remain. The waters are gone; but in the sides of the rocky walls are the fissures, and crannies, and caves, that no time will wear away. Just so do the flowing streams of act, and thought, and circumstance, wear into the heart of man, and leave impressions for eternity. You have sat down beside an old man, it may be, and heard him relate the events of his early manhood. He was prosperous, then he met with reverses, and he had

struggles and hardships, and joys and disappointments. But all have now gone. To him they seem afar off, and he speaks of them as the mariner, in the home of old age, speaks of the events of some long past voyage. They have gone, did I say? No; every one of them has left a print upon his soul. He is what he now is, because of what he then did and forbore. Every event of the past has left a mark in his soul forever. Geologists have discovered in the rocks footprints of a huge race of birds, which had perished from the earth long before man was made. The transient footprints were made in a soil which yielded like clay, but the soil hardened into stone, and still preserves in solid rock the old impressions. So it is that the events of the present live or make an impression on the yielding heart of man, and the heart hardens and retains them. Those events may seem very small, but they are feeders to great underlying principles, just as the transient sunshine and shower nourish the twig which shall outlive a century of such changes, growing up into an oak, whose broad arms hang out a shadow in the summer's heat, and defy the tempests that beat upon the shore, and bear the thunders and powers of a nation across the seas.

Be careful how you live. In Pompeii they find scores who had been overtaken by death suddenly, and in the exact position at the time of their arrest they remain to-day. Some were found with hands clutching at gold coins, some with fingers clenched on the handle of a door, some kneeling before their household gods; and death perpetuated not only their posi-

tions, but from those very positions we can read their characters. So death comes to many still and it were terrible to be arrested in the midst of associations and acts that are unholy, and to go into eternity wearing a corresponding character.

III. Life finding its compensation.

The sentence of the text at first sight seems all severity, but we shall soon see that it was tempered with mercy. It seems strange that of all Israel's great ones he should lie in an unknown grave. The sepulchres of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were known among the graves of Hebron. The bones of Joseph rested in Shechem. Rachel's tomb stood in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. The sepulchre of David was by Jerusalem—the home of his heart. Of Moses, “No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.” And how strange it must have been to the Jew to think that the meanest of all the tribes should enter the land, while his leader should be excluded. But, after all, was not Moses in the end the gainer? When the prospect of the earthly Canaan faded from his eye, another, with brighter skies and better soil and fresher river and more precious fruits, opened to his enraptured view. The Jerusalem, for which those who entered the land had to fight many a battle, came to him new and golden; for the tumult of the congregation he joined the calm of the general assembly and church of the first-born. His death, instead of cutting off his life from its grand object, realized it beyond his conception, and realized it to him forever. At the

bottom of the life of Moses there was a true, honest purpose, and that purpose triumphed, notwithstanding all the failure. Let this thought comfort us. We feel often as if our nature were all broken by flood and failure. We look back, and see unsatisfied yearnings and shattered hopes. Green fields of promise once gleamed before us. We marched through deserts, and by winding, tortuous paths up to the very border of the green land, when we were suddenly cut off from it. And now we seem to sit down in the midst of broken columns and withered prospects, and write failure on everything about us. But, oh, if there has been a true purpose in the life, it will reach a perfect close one day, and its visions shall all be realized. And then there was another way in which compensation was given to Moses. He had prayed earnestly that he might enter the earthly Canaan, and though death in the meantime disappointed him, God in His own way and time answered his prayer. Long ages after the limbs of the man of God had been composed by angels in the grave that was in the solitudes of the Moab mountains, over against Beth-peor, a man of holy aspects, but in whose countenance grief had made its furrows, in company with three chosen followers, wended his way up the slopes of Hermon as the evening shadows gathered, and speaking to the spirit world two kindred spirits from the brotherhood of the redeemed came forth and talked with the transfigured Jesus of the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. Surely, if the sacred soil had any crowning honor, it was when the Son of God walked it. For

1,500 years Moses was detained at the gate that he might look upon the land in its glorious prime. Brethren, let that circumstance show you how long God can bear a prayer in memory. He was 1,500 years answering the prayer of Moses, but He did answer it. No prayers that are in agreement with the will of God can be lost. The angel of the covenant, who holds the golden censer before the altar, takes the prayers of all saints, and in His own good time mingles them with His prevalent intercessions, and pours them out before the majesty of heaven.

Brethren, learn from the history of Moses to hate sin with a perfect hatred. "Let not sin have dominion over you." And learn from Moses how to die. He ascended Nebo—not like a reluctant, dejected culprit. He did not mourn, nor grieve, nor murmur at the divine command. Beautiful, heroic, triumphant was his conduct. And so it may be with thee. Only let thy life be consecrated to the Master, and when summoned to depart thou shalt ascend the summit whence faith looks forth on the goodly land, and, exclaiming, "We have waited for Thy salvation, Lord," thou shalt pass through the gates into the city to be forever with the Lord.

VII.

GLORYING IN THE CROSS.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."—GAL. vi. 14.

WHY did the apostle glory in the cross of Christ? There were other things which, at first sight, we would have thought him disposed to glory in.

1. He might have gloried in that which gave earthly delight, power and enjoyment. The young man glories in the vigor of his frame, the buoyancy and hope of youth. The man of wealth glories in his title deeds, investments, accumulated funds and stocks. The man of fame glories in his position, the offices he has filled, the influence he has gained. The statesman glories in that he has been able to mark out great lines for the development of the resources of his country, and place it in the highest ranks of life. The warrior glories in the battles he has fought and the victories he has won, which place laurels on his brow and hang the immortelles upon his name. All this is glorying in something that gives ease, comfort, wealth, or joy. But the cross cut Paul off from every one of these, and yet he glories in it.

2. How much there was in Christianity to glory in besides the cross. Take the person of Christ, John

says of Him in the opening of his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." What a field to glory in these Scriptures open! Oh, to preach Christ as the Maker of all worlds! To point to the vast universe, worlds on worlds innumerable, which He cast as from His hands into the wide expanse of space, and gave them all their elements and resources; to dwell on the power of creation, the grandeur and limitless wisdom and beauties developed under this creative power; what a field in which fancy might take its loftiest flights!

Then think of the wisdom of His instructions. "He spake as never man spake." The multitudes gathered round Him, listening to the words that dropped from His lips. The crowd stood, enraptured with His teachings, as they gathered round Him on the mountain sides, or followed Him through the valleys, or left their homes and went out into the wilderness, attracted by the wonderful thought of His teachings. Now, as men honor the great philosophers of earth, as they dwell on the names of Plato and Socrates and others of intellectual might, why not thus dwell on the teachings of Christ, and why not glory in the wisdom of His words, and exalt Him above the philosophers of earth for the profound grasp of His thought, for the power to take away the veil from futurity, for the strange power of bringing the invisible to light?

Then, again, he might have turned to the actions of

Christ. He could draw the scenes of the life of Christ; point to His birth, while the star from heaven became the signal to show the Wise Men the way to His cradle; show how God watched over the Infant and saved Him from the wrath of Herod; point out how, when a boy, he confounded the doctors of the law; show how as a God He created, and how as a Saviour He blessed; how His heart flowed out with sympathy to every human being, boundless in His benevolence and raising up earth. What a theme to dwell upon—the wonderful works of Christ. But in none of these does Paul glory. “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,”—the cross His death—the death of a malefactor; the curse and indication of shame—crucified between two thieves, as if He had been the worst of the three.

He would speak of Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God; but all that is exhibited in the cross. If He spoke of the forgiveness of sins, it was to be through the cross. If he spoke of adoption into the family of God, if he spoke of redemption and sanctification, it was to be through the cross. If he spoke of the union of believers, bringing the whole universe into one, it was around the cross. If he spoke of conquest over death and the grave, and the hope of everlasting life, it was through the cross. Everywhere the cross was the centre of his teachings, the grand symbol around which the hopes of immortality clustered.

Now we ask, why was this? and we reply:

(1) Because in the scene of that cross was manifested

the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Man thinks of sin as a little matter. There are very few of us who have those deep views of sin we ought to have, that loathing abhorrence of evil which we ought to entertain; but in the cross of Christ is brought out the great abhorrence which God has of sin, the absolute impossibility of His passing over it without its being punished, and the fact that sin is so abhorrent to God that the result of it must be death. Now, this is seen in the cross, that there was no way by which the sin of the world could be taken away but through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." And thus was the lesson early taught to man. How early we cannot tell, but probably immediately after the fall. It is said that God made to our first parents coats of skins, probably the skins of animals sacrificed for sin. Be that as it may, we find Abel offering the victim on the altar, and all down the Mosaic economy, we have men offering sacrifices for sin. And the whole voice of those sacrifices proclaimed two things: first, that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin, that sin must have death. "The wages of sin is death;" and secondly, the great truth that through the shedding of blood there would be remission—through death there might be life. Now, when we take into view that sin must have death following it, as its result, we see how abhorrent it is to Almighty God. What a terrible thing it is to sin against God—"The soul that sinneth it shall die."

Sin is not to be thought of in itself merely, and

measured with some other sin. We may take murder, and see the terrible character of sin. But that is as it relates to man. The essence of sin is simply disobeying God, and the sin in which the disobedience is shown, be it what it may, is that which makes it offensive to God. It is the heart that rebels against God; it is the determination not to obey God, and that may be seen in the smallest as well as in the greatest things—and that disobedience God regards so that the soul that transgresses must perish, unless there be a sin-offering, for that only can take the sin away. As we gather round Christ, then; as we stand by His side when He wrestles there in Gethsemane until the sweat drops from His brow as beads of blood; as we stand by Him at Calvary, and hear His burdened bosom heave; as we see Him in that intense agony, when He cries, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" we see the sinfulness of sin in this—that He suffers when God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. And God requires, of Him—though He is His own Son—though a voice from the open heaven proclaims, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him"—though on the mount of Transfiguration the very Godhead shone out from His garments so that they were white as snow, and His countenance was bright as the sun in his glory—yet when that Son stands in your place and in mine the heavens grow black, the very earth shakes, the graves are opened, the dead go forth, and the burdened bosom of the infinite God incarnate in humanity feels the load too great to be borne, even in anticipation, and cries, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from

Me." I stand in the presence of these scenes, and say, how terrible must be the nature of that sin which we have committed, which stains our souls, and renders them obnoxious to Almighty God! The first step in the recovery of any one from illness is to fully understand the nature of the disease. If man is to be recovered, he must know how deep are the stains of sin, and that he learns as he stands beside the cross. Sinner, in that cross you may see the terrible load that must have fallen on you if Christ had not stepped under it that you might go free. You may learn the terrible character of that cup you must have drained if Christ had not tasted it for you. You may feel something of that agony you must have borne had not Christ assumed your place and borne it for you.

But there is another aspect in which we may see the hatefulness of sin. As we stand round that cross behold how heaven and earth and hell seemed to gather round it. From the heavens, God and angels were gazing on that scene. From below, demons and evil spirits were gathered there ready to hold their jubilee when Christ should die upon the cross. But man, for whom Christ died, gathered round that cross, and how does he gaze on Him who is becoming sin for him? He ought to have gathered round that cross with tears of sorrow and yet with tears of joy. Why, when the angels saw that Christ was to come, they cried out, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men." But when man saw Christ come and dying for him, he cried, "Away with Him; crucify Him!" "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Then consider,

too, that in that throng there was possibly not one some member of whose family had not been healed by Christ. He had preached in their cities, healing the sick wherever He went. At Capernaum, at Jerusalem, at Bethany He had gone to and fro among the poor, the wretched and the dying. And now from all parts of the land multitudes had gathered at the Passover, and there hung upon the cross the Man who had rebuked their fevers, cured their leprosy, healed their lameness, raised their dead; and yet they wagged their heads, and said, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." "His blood be upon us and upon our children." And there, too, in that solemn scene, in full view of the agonies of death, men gambled for His robe—tossing the dice upon the spot soiled by the blood that trickled from the cross. Oh, the depravity of the human heart! *That* shows to us the sinfulness of sin. *There* is where you and I would have stood. We think, not so. The men that stood there had the same nature we have, the very same feelings we have; and sin unrestrained in the heart would have led us just where they stood. Nay, if you do not receive Jesus to-night you stand by His cross rejecting His atoning blood; you crucify Him to yourselves afresh, and put Him to an open shame. I charge it home to you; think of the guilt it involves; rejecting Christ is a sin as great as that committed by the man who pierced His side with the Roman spear.

(2) The cross shows us the wonderful love of God for the sinner. The love of God—I see it in the heavens above me, in the shining sun, and in the

sparkling stars. I see it in the breath which breathes around me and which I inhale. I see it in the earth carpeted with green and strewn with flowers ; in the music of the birds, and in all things that are beautiful around me ; but how feeble these lessons of the love of God, compared with that love manifested in Jesus Christ. When the sinner transgressed, reason said, " Let him die," and law said, " Let him die," but God said, " I cannot give him up." A father says of a prodigal son, " He is a prodigal ; he knows he has done wrong ; still he is a son, and I cannot give him up ;" and the father's affection follows that son wherever he goes, weeping, sorrowing, crushed in spirit ; still he is a son. So the great Father bends down over us ; we are erring, faithless, wicked children ; we are culprits. Yet He yearns over us as He asks, how can they be saved, how brought back ? He looks. Earth has no offering, angels have no power, arch-angels have no strength. He holds the book that asks the question, " How can humanity be saved ? and there is no man that can break the seals or look thereon, until there comes the Lion of the tribe of Judah." He takes the book in His hand, He finds the plan of salvation, He offers to die for man, and the Father loves sinners so much that He " gives His only begotten Son," etc. I have often tried to form some conception of the love of God, and I have found the best way to do so is to put it alongside His other attributes. Suppose you put it now beside the purity of God. I have seen a child afflicted with a frightfully loathsome disease. I will not try to describe its ulcer-

ated limbs—kept away, as he was, from the sight of man, in a private apartment. But was he neglected? No; and I need not tell you who attended to him. Every morning the loving mother of that child bathed his wounds and swathed his limbs, and there was not an evening that she wearied in her toil. Do you think the mother had not natural sensitiveness? She was keenly sensitive; but by so much more as she felt the loathsomeness of her work, you see the love that upheld her in the doing of it. But, oh, what is the loathsomeness of cankered wounds compared with the loathsomeness of sin to God? There is but one thing that God hates, and that is sin. When it appeared in the angels, He swept them from their thrones; when it broke out in the universe, He scooped the pit of hell to put it in; and so terrible a thing is it, that by-and-by He will put the hatches down and keep it out of the universe forever. Yet, with all His hatred of sin, how He hangs over the sinner, how he woos the sinner. He hates sin, and by so much as He hates it is His infinite love made manifest in the death of Christ. Or, put His love beside His justice. I don't think that in God's estimate of Satan's opposition a thought was given how He should conquer that paltry foe. All that the devil could do to frustrate the designs of God was but as the power of a cobweb put out to stop an express train. The difficulty did not lie with the enemy, it lay with Himself. The grand mystery was, "How can God be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth?" How can He be holy, and yet the sinners' friend? These were His

difficulties—things that came up from Himself. But when God's Son dies on yonder cross, all the universe sees how law must be kept inviolable, while God's love for man, and the Son's love for man, flames with a steady light, and God can both be just and the justifier of him that believeth. Or put His love beside His omniscience. I have often thought it well for us and well for the world that we cannot see into the future. If we could see all the trouble, and disappointment, and pain of our lives, we would refuse to live. And so, too, with benevolent and charitable institutions. If we could see the trouble, and the cost, and the vexations involved, and the bad use that would be made of our charity, we would have nothing to do with them. But when God covenanted with His Son in the matter of redemption, He saw all the future. He knew how sinners would turn His grace to wantonness, how blasphemies would rise from human hearts, and the smoke of ten thousand idol altars would ascend from earth to heaven. He saw it all, and He saw it all at once; yet in His mighty love He gives His Son to die for His revilers. Gave His Son. He had but one. When Jesus looked at the poor woman in the Temple, casting her mite into the treasury, He found a new rule of arithmetic. She gave her all. Many gave much; but the Lord looked at what they had left. She gave her all, and hence gave more than any other. Try God by His own rule. He had but one Son, His only begotten. If He had taken every star from the sky, and manipulated those stars as you might manipulate grains of wheat, and

moulded them all into a gigantic body, of which every star was an atom ; and then if He had taken every seraph from His throne and every spirit from the universe, and made a mighty amalgam of all souls into one, and had put that giant mind into that gigantic body, and given that body and soul for man, it would have been nothing to this. A word of His could have restored the dismantled heavens, but God Himself cannot make an only begotten Son. It is His only Son, and He gave Him into our nature, into our flesh. He made Him to go into our grave and to our death.

There is one text in the New Testament that seems to me to be the concentrated essence of the entire Gospel, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There is no limitation in that text—He gave His Son for the world. John Williams, the great missionary, said that when he sailed in his missionary ship, and touched a shore where he had never been before, where no foot of white man had ever trod, he always preached from that text. God's love is not bounded by mountains and oceans—God so loved the *world*. And then there is that word *whosoever*. As you have a general declaration for the world, you have now this specific put in. John Bunyan once said of this that it was worth all the gold that could be put between London and York if piled up to the stars ; and Martin Luther said it was so good, that a man might cheerfully fetch it from Jerusalem on his hands and knees. These are

two grand words, whosoever and whatsoever—whosoever looks outward to the race, and whatsoever looks inward to the wants of the believer. Whosoever—that is the longest link of the golden chain of mercy that reaches to just beside hell. Whosoever—oh, is there no one here to-night who will take hold of this word and be saved? “Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish.” Some of you remember reading in the history of the Mutiny in India about that miscreant, the king of Delhi. He fled, and was pursued by a British force under a certain officer. He took refuge in a mausoleum—and the officer, not having a very strong force, was only too glad to get hold of him, and he said, “If you surrender you shall not be put to death.” A great many complained of the officer; they said this man has murdered children and defiled women, and should be hung as high as Haman. But I never heard any one say that when the word was once given it should be broken. That king trusted the word of England, and there he stood firm. The soldiers were there, and many of them would have liked to kill him, but he walked about unharmed. Many of them had rifles, and they would have liked to have sent their bullets whizzing through his body. But England’s word was around him, and said, “He shall not die.” O I remember when my poor, dark, lost spirit was there in that dark mausoleum of sin, in darkness and condemnation. I remember when the voice of God came to me, “Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish.” I believed it, and came forth; and it seemed to me as if the fiery fingers of the law pointed to me, and there

came a voice of thunder, "Iniquities damn him." And the accuser said, "Damn him." But God's word was around me, and it said, "He shall not perish." Hell cannot touch me, the devil cannot have me, while I hold fast to the word, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." I don't exactly know what that everlasting life may mean. They are two grand words welded together—"Life and Eternity." Life—pure, perfect, glorious—life that shall know no end; life in a country fairer than Canaan, in a city better than Jerusalem—life at home with God.

3. There is another truth preached to us by the cross of Christ. It clears away the mystery of death, for it shows death as the reverse side of resurrection and holy triumph. Death is only the waning of our mortal being, that the immortal being may have freedom and enlargement. Hence on the very eve of crucifixion, we are told, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." The cross, the way to the glorification of the Son of man. And the glorification came; for after His resurrection He led His disciples out as far as Bethany and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as in majesty he passed up and through the gates of the City of God, a voice was heard, saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." And a responsive voice from within the gates says, "Who is the King of glory?" and the voice from without cries, "The Lord strong and

mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." He has been down meeting death, sin, a violated law, the claims of justice; meeting devils armed with all the fury of hell. He has trampled them beneath His feet, He has broken the bars of death, led captivity captive, received gifts for men. Then from within is heard the answer, If this be He, then "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in." Oh, methinks I see the crowns of myriads of angels and seraphs flying like meteors and falling at His feet, while the Father bids Him sit at His right hand, and reign till death and hell are put under His feet. Here reign till the wicked superstitions of earth shall be banished, till the devils shall cower back to their native hell, till the earth "shall be filled with the glory of God." Here reign till death shall surrender his millions of the human family, until the great end of time, until the jubilee of the saints shall occur in the resurrection of those who have died in the prosecution of duty and allegiance to God. And He will reign till there rings out upon the ear of a listening universe, the glad acclamation, "Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Ah, friends, we have our Gethsemanes and our death scenes, ties break and hearts bleed; but let the light that streams from the cross be turned upon our vales of sorrow and our Calvaries of suffering, and we shall remember that death is only the hither side of resurrection unto life,

and that the darkest midnights are broken by the dawn of Easter mornings.

Brethren, I have tried to bring before you the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It nailed Jesus to the cross. Will you love it still? A Gallic prince of the Middle Ages, was listening once to a missionary reciting the story of the cross, the hatred of the Jews and the brutality of the Roman soldiery, when, roused to feelings of indignation, he cried out in the church, "Oh, if I had been there with my Gauls." Can you love and harbor that which crushed the heart of the Son of man? Is there no heart here to say, "I hate the sins that made Thee mourn and drove Thee from my breast." And I have tried to bring before you the love of God for you. Will you now bow before that love and suffer it to draw you to the Saviour? Has God no claim upon your heart? Do ye not know that His mercy is designed to lead you to repentance? If the love of God is not an argument to convince your judgment and affect your heart, I know not what will. And then I have tried to suggest to you the results that spring from glorying in the cross—victory over death and ultimate entrance into heaven. Has heaven no charms? Do not your hearts desire it? Is there no wish to enjoy its beatitudes after this life is over? No cross, no crown.

VIII.

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."—1 THESS. v. 23, 24.

NO peculiarity is more deeply impressed upon the writings of St. Paul than the abundance of their expressions of devotion. Either as doxology or benediction, as praise or supplication, as ejaculatory formula or studied outpouring, prayer stamps its solemn grandeur on every page of his epistles. In the words that I have chosen as a text this morning St. Paul gathers up and utters all his desire for the Thessalonian Christians. In reading this prayer we are liable to fall into the temptation that it presents an aim too grand for our attainment. We are apt to imagine that an apostle—with his profoundly devotional soul, so adapted to the influences of heaven—might attain to it ; or that in these days some lonely student, endowed with that imperial intellect that rules the body, and living apart from the rushing tumults of the world, might reach it. But that to men brought daily into contact with hard material facts and the perpetual temptations of common life, such a prayer is beyond the measure of our possibilities. Let it be borne in mind, however, that St. Paul does not

here sketch an ideal perfection to be hoped for only in eternity. What he prays for, every believer may obtain on earth. *Every believer*, I say ; for there is no hierarchy in the kingdom of grace—save what is created by degrees of earnestness in the prayer of faith. There is great encouragement for us in this respect from the position which this prayer occupies as the conclusion of a wonderful strain contained in the chapter. In the thirteenth verse, the idea of love vanquishing all evil and pursuing all good, stirs the apostle's soul ; and then he advances to a series of wonderful precepts, each bearing the burden of perfection. "Be at peace among yourselves ; warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." And just at the point when our ambition to be perfect has been stimulated to the utmost, with one of those master-strokes for which he is so remarkable, the apostle glides off from what we can do for ourselves to what none but God can do for us. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh, then, it is enough, if this whole sanctification and preservation in blamelessness be the work of God, surely I can attain to it, since "His strength is perfected in my weakness." The subject for us then is :

The entireness of personal sanctification.

It will be necessary for us first to notice what kind of entireness is not meant by the apostle. There is a sense in which all accepted believers are necessarily

entirely sanctified. They are absolutely washed from the guilt of their sins ; their hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience, and that defilement which must needs hinder divine acceptance is not seen in them. As the sprinkling of typical blood, under the old economy, and the washing of typical water, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, so the better blood and purer water of the Gospel purified the conscience and washed the spiritual body of the sacrifice. In this sense sanctification is one with justification ; they meet and go together for a season, before they widely separate. The soul that is justified in the court mediatorial is sanctified before the altar in the temple. Now, this sanctification is always entire, as justification is always complete. "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

In another sense, too, believers may be said to be entirely sanctified. They are presented to God upon an altar that makes everything holy that touches it, and thus they are set apart, consecrated and devoted to the service of God. The seal impressed on Christians marks them out as the Lord's. They are His whose Spirit they receive. Now, that consecration to God must be in a certain sense absolute, if it exist at all. The offering must be either on the altar or not on the altar. But this is not the sanctification indicated by Paul. The oblation placed on the altar is entirely destined for God, and therefore is and must be wholly dedicated to God ; but it has yet to go up to heaven in the consuming fire as a whole burnt offering.

The entire sanctification mentioned in the text is

expressed in two ways: it is the consecration of the whole person or being of the Christian, and the preservation of the same whole person in a state of blamelessness till the coming of Christ. But that term consecration is to be regarded in a higher sense than the mere total dedication of our powers to God. That is, indeed, included. The believer freely, voluntarily dedicates himself wholly to God, and then God wholly consecrates that which has been presented. God sanctified in the olden times by washings and purifyings, and now God consecrates us to Himself by pouring into our whole being the light of His truth and the grace of His Spirit, purifying us in every part. It is the function, act, and energy of the Holy Ghost—"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," etc. The work is one of divine power—"He will do it." Now, this separates our sanctification from any disciplinary self-consecration which man by his own power can effect. It is not the result of a new direction or impetus given to our faculties; it is through no energy of the self-consecrating will, through no mighty outgoings of the regenerate feeling. There is a power above and behind all these, using them, indeed, each and all, but not leaving the receiving of holiness to them. It is not the moral agent recovering himself by divine aid, but a new and more abundant life infused, and sustained, and brought to perfection within man's own heart, but by a power above it. The sanctifying power of God pervades man's whole being, extends to all the elements of his nature—"the whole"—and it sanctifies them "wholly," as belonging to one indivisible person.

Mark now how Paul speaks of this whole being sanctified. He refers to that great trinity of powers in man—body, soul and spirit—which link him so wondrously with three different worlds. It may be that there is some deep hidden connection in the work of sanctification between the Trinity in God and the trinity of powers in man; but a consideration of this would not be appropriate to-day. The whole man, however, is sanctified. The body is sanctified. Not that it is crushed, but used solely for the glory of God. In that sanctified body, pleasure and pain, the glad consciousness of strength, the strong efforts of labor, the bounding joy of spring mornings and the solemn awe of autumn evenings—all these are regarded, not as carnal or worldly, but as the holy gifts of our Father, used sacredly as under His eye. And the *soul* is sanctified. The soul in Scriptural prayer, when mentioned apart from the spirit, comes between the higher and lower elements of our being. Paul means by it the powers that are merely natural, in contrast with the powers that are spiritual. It is the sphere of the desires and passions—the passions of ambition and gain, the affections for home and kindred and country by which we are bound to the sorrowing, rejoicing, toiling world around us. Those passions and desires, innocent in themselves, are transformed by sin into sinful affections and lust; but they are restored to innocence by being brought under the control of the Holy Ghost, through the will refusing them their unholy stimulants in the world. And the spirit is sanctified. The spirit of man is that element of his

nature which makes his proud distinction. In that he is only a little lower than the angels. There is the seal of the divine image in man—an image that may be marred, but never can be lost. Meanwhile, in the sanctified man that spirit is wholly consecrated to God. The reason is filled with truth, and becomes a mirror capable of reflecting the divine image—an eye that can in everything see God. The conscience is sanctified unto perfect fidelity as an eternal legislator, true to the truth; and the will is sanctified as the servant of its own choice and the master of its own acts—sanctified by release from unholy motives, and by the constant influence of the truth applied by the Holy Spirit. Such is the sanctification of the whole man. True, we cannot claim for this an absolute character. Sufferers from the fall, inheriting a body that is frail, a judgment that is weak, and that unconsciously sometimes, though, ever affects our actions, absolute perfection may not be expected yet; that can only be when man is glorified; but now a man may be wholly sanctified—sanctified to God—so that in all the walks of life, in all the business of the world, and amid the troubles and temptations that crowd his path he can look up in adoring confidence, and appeal, “Lord, Thou knowest I love Thee,” and though there be in me infirmities, yet with all the powers I possess I consciously serve Thee, and perfectly love Thy holy name. Brethren, the entire sanctification of body, soul and spirit is our great necessity and duty. Men have often tried to purify their outward life alone, leaving the soul unguarded and the spirit unsundered, and then the

secret sins of pride and imagination break out at last into open acts, and wreck their outward purity. Men have left the spirit unconsecrated, leaving the soul and body unguarded, or only partly guarded. Peter tried that. He had subdued the bodily fear of death; he had nerved his soul to meet scorn and shame, and declared himself ready for Christ to die; but, alas! before the first temptation he fell. Men have tried to hallow the spirit, only they have endeavored to keep their higher life apart and separate, as too holy to do their daily work, and the result has been dishonesty, fraud and hypocrisy. No; we must be consecrated in all our powers, in all aspirations, in all prosperities, in all adversities, in all labor, in all worship, in all thought, in all speech—in body, soul and spirit.

And now, supposing the believer to have wholly dedicated himself to God, and supposing God to have wholly sanctified that offering, so that at this moment body, and soul, and spirit are holy, is it possible to carry this into our experience? Is it possible to continue in such a state? Mark the apostle's teaching, "I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Entire sanctification is confirmed, habitual, uninterrupted devotion of the whole being to God. God is to preserve the continuing, believing soul. As the power that created the world sustains it by an abiding omnipresent energy, so the power that can fix the whole strength of the soul upon God, can keep it fixed on Him. In the wholly sanctified soul, establishing grace reigns. The differ-

ence between the wholly and the partially sanctified is, that in the one there is permanent devotion to God, while in the other it is more or less wavering. You have often experienced a strong influence of grace descending in answer to prayer, that has carried the whole soul to God for a season, stilling every alien feeling within you. It was the prayer of faith that brought that blessing, and when that prayer of faith becomes unceasing, the act of intense devotion settles down into the constant tranquil state of the soul. My brethren, this is what we want; and our piety will be more or less defective until we gain it. And surely it is the want of that entire sanctification to God of body, soul and spirit, that accounts for a Christian life, full of varying experiences, of sinning and repenting, of memory of holy communings broken off by sudden risings of passion, and anger, and resentment.

But again, while entire sanctification is habitual communion with God, as the supreme good of the soul, it is the habitual reference of every act to the glory of God. While faith fills the soul, it is faith that works by love. Love makes the man who is continually sanctifying God in the temple of his heart, a never-wearying servant of God in the activities of his life. Life has no higher perfection than this, everything done with a conscious aim to glorify God. Oh, dear brethren, it is here that many of us fail. That is a beautiful idea embodied in Zech. xiv. 20, 21. Holiness in common things, common works and words, eating and drinking, sleeping and waking; holiness in the shop and market-place, in buying and selling,

in journeying and resting; holiness in the railway carriage and on the highway; holiness in our reading, and conversation and letter-writing; holiness in our mirth, our feasts, and in our ordinary intercourse. Many seem to forget that a holy life is exemplified by common duties more than anything else. A truly holy life is a common life sanctified. "Were I a minister," says one, "with nothing to do but with religious subjects and acts, it would be well." Or, they say, "If I had more time to spare, I could glorify God more." No; a life of leisure is not as easily managed as some think; self comes in, irregularities come in, efforts are desultory. Holiness in obedience to "Six days shalt thou labor," as to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." The little things of life are to be attended to. In these, Adam served God when he tilled the ground; Abel, when he kept sheep; Amos, when he gathered sycamore fruit; Joseph, when he wrought as a tradesman; Paul, when he made tents. It is thus that we are to glorify God, inscribing "Holiness unto the Lord" on everything we do. It is easy to hang up a text in our chamber, but let our words and deeds be a continual recognition of the Lord our God. Let us make ourselves the texts. Regulate your house so that it shall speak of God. It is not at family worship or in asking a blessing alone, that God is to be seen. Let Him be everywhere seen and felt.

Turning to the text again, there is another thought. This state of entire consecration is preserved in "blamelessness"—literally "unblameworthy." That is,

no blame is imputed—to them thy life a life free from venom or voluntary sin. The wholly sanctified are preserved blameless by virtue of the atoning death and blood on which they evermore rely, and hence it said they shall be unblamable at the coming of Christ. This coming of Christ is an argument used by the apostle in favor of entire sanctification. Because that day is coming, the day of purity and manifestation. Keep the body, soul and spirit pure—the body, that it may shine out glorified in that day; the soul, that its pure powers may be able to perceive the truth and light of that day; the spirit, that it may be able to commune with the eternal love when that day comes.

And, lest any trembling soul should despair of reaching this exalted life, the apostle closes with the great encouragement, “Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.” It is not simply that God is mighty, and will achieve the full sanctification of His saints—“He is faithful who has promised, who also will do it.” And that word “faithful” takes us back to His covenant and His promise; and that covenant says, and that promise is: “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you.”

And now, my dear brethren, I have endeavoured to bring before you this great doctrine, and in closing I would strongly urge you this morning to make an entire consecration to God. I urge it, because it is right. We belong to God, we live at His expense, we are His purchased possession. He bought us with a price; and, oh, what a price! What can be more reason-

able than that we should live, "not unto ourselves, but unto Him that loved us, and gave Himself for us." I urge it, because it is the best use we can make of our powers. It is not only right, but it is wise. To live with any other intent, to any other purpose, is to prostitute our powers to all that is calamitous to self and to others, with reference both to time and to eternity. Entire consecration is the devotion of our powers to the highest and holiest of all purposes, it is to make them productive of the greatest good. God requires nothing more of us than He has done and purposes to do for us. He gave his Son to suffering service and death for us. He kept back no part of the price. He drank the cup to its uttermost dregs, and for the future He offers all that it is possible for heaven to bestow. If we will but become His people, He will become our God. Father, Son and Holy Ghost, all things become ours. "May the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

IX.

THE UNFOLDING LIFE.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.”—EPH. iii. 14-16.

IN this epistle the apostle gives his readers many earnest exhortations looking to the development and confirmation of their Christian character. But the sublime prayer which we are to study this morning is itself both exhortation and encouragement. And what Paul prayed for on behalf of these brethren should represent both the prayer of a pastor and the endeavor of his flock.

The prayer is addressed to the “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” “There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” The whole family of God means all His children, no matter where they are—shining forth with distinction among the white-robed hierarchies of the sky, or treading with sorrowful hearts the rough places of the earth. No matter to what nation they belong—Jews or Gentiles, dwellers in the frozen north or sunny south, they all have one name, and one Redeemer, and one common parentage. There are many congregations and many

denominations but there is but one family. Those who are in heaven have not left the household; and here Christ the Elder Brother appeals to God the Father to bless His children, not according to their merits, but according to His own riches, His own wealth, "according to the riches of His glory"—that is an unknown quantity, unsearchable riches. Ask the seraphim who hover near His throne, who have dwelt with Him through cycles which we cannot number, who with keen eye have watched His outgoings and with giant intellect have pondered His ways; ask them for an idea of the riches of His glory, and they reply, we have ever desired to look into these things, but we cannot fathom them. Ask righteous Abel, who clave the clouds and entered into heaven when earth was young; ask the great cloud of witnesses who encircle the throne rejoicing, and they will tell you that they have but reached the porch, while the great temple is unexplored. "That He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." I shall ask you now to consider these four things contained in the text:

I. Spiritual strength.

II. The indwelling of Christ.

III. The comprehension of love.

IV. The crown of all, the fulness of God.

I. "To be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." Observe the seat of this strength—"in

the inner man." We may rightly ask and endeavor earnestly to get both bodily and mental strength. While some of the men who have been physically the weakest, the sickliest, have been men of towering genius, and who, by their inventions and productions shall be embalmed forever in the world's memory, yet amongst earth's most valuable possessions is a strong mind in a strong body. You men and women of sound constitutions and unbroken health don't know what misery you have escaped, and what blessings you are dowered with. But bodily and mental strength are not the most important things. We need above all things to be strong in the inner man, to be strong in character. Power of intellect, feeling and will in the direction of God; strength to know, to feel, and to do the things which God has declared to be our duty. Strong characters are the demand and the need of the times. And character is a thing of the heart. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." Christian character is not an outside show of glittering practice or lofty profession. It is strength of will to resist temptation; strength of sympathy to relieve the oppressed; strength of love to encircle the lost. It is the man standing unmoved by the bribes of Satan, unseduced by the allurements of ungodliness, unfaltering amidst the fiery darts of the wicked one. Strength in the inner man.

2. The source of this strength. "By His Spirit." I have spoken of the strength of will, and there is a great deal in that. You have known individuals who by an energy of will-power, of pluck and determination, have overcome difficulties that would have crushed

others, and endured pain that would have killed others, and worked out success that would never have been reached by others. And there is a great deal in hope and the inspiration that comes from the attainment of some cherished object, to sustain and nerve a man. During the Prussian war, one day, the surgeon said to the general, "These troops can't march any farther, they are so foot-sore they must go into the hospital." And the general said, "Let me talk to them." Said he, "Soldiers, I am going to-day to march right up to Paris, and take the city. Let every man that wants to share in the glory follow me." And, with a shout like thunder, the poor foot-sore legions bounded forward; and, though torn and bleeding, rested not till Paris was in German hands. But moral and spiritual courage requires a divine inspiration. For the strange fact is, that often he who would without a tremor march to the cannon's mouth will cower before a laugh. Our help in moral conflict must be divine. He who relies upon himself in the hour of spiritual trial will be the victim of defeat. The believer is strengthened by God's Spirit in the inner man. "Ye shall be kept by the power of God." Greater is He that is in you than all that can be against you." The Spirit dwells within, and is the shield and buckler of God's people.

3. Then further, you will note the degree of this spiritual strength, strengthened with might. The new version reads, "strengthened with power through the Spirit." The idea is, powerfully strengthened, abundantly strengthened to bear trials, to perform duties, to glorify His name. Strength not in small measure,

but in great. It is not simply for the breath of the Spirit to touch us, but that He may come over and upon us in power. When was Samson strong? When the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. With that endowment, every believer will be a spiritual Samson; without it, we are Samson shorn of his locks. Powerfully strengthened by the Spirit of God, the Church will be an all-conquering host; without it, she may preach like a Chrysostom, sing like an archangel, dwell in a palace of gold; but her services will be barren of results, and from her gorgeous trappings men will go down to perdition. But with the baptism of the Spirit on her brow and the power of the Spirit in her heart, she shall be a Moses standing with uplifted arms, while before her enemies flee away. May the good Lord grant unto us "according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man."

II. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. First, He dwells in believers as a personal presence. When faith embraces a living Saviour, he becomes more than a thought or fancy. To the critic, cold and sceptical, Christ is but a thought, a problem. To the indifferent believer, He is a far-off, unsubstantial idea. But to the real believer He is a personal presence. Christ is nearer us than our most intimate friends. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." There are two "me's" in every man; an outer and an inner me. The inner one is that central essence which resides, as it were, within all the faculties and moves them all. It

is the me that I know. The outer is the me that you know, that you see, approve or condemn. Now it is this me, this glorious body, this grand mind; this glowing, beating heart; this throbbing, electric conscience; this outer me, which Paul means when he says, "Christ liveth in me." The man in whom He lives says: "You know my former life. It was I who lived then. It was my ideas, my wishes, my tastes which made me then. But it's not so now. I have seen Christ, I have been with Him; and in addition to being my friend outside of me with whom I can converse, He is also a living system of truths, a living revelation of divine ideas. Truth has laid hold of me by Him; eternity touches me by Him; hope fills me from Him; holiness begins to suffuse me from Him. He is all in all to me. I live, but still it is not I, it is Christ that liveth in me." Second, this presence of Jesus is an abiding presence. He is not an occasional visitor, but a constant guest—a resident. He dwells in the heart, and where He dwells there is constancy of religious life. Oh! there is so much fitful piety, now flaming with zeal and now freezing with cold; now in ecstasy and now in dull, dead lethargy. We want an abiding Christ; a settled, fixed, stable principle, divine. Third, this is a sin-expelling presence. Dr. Chalmers has a fine sermon on the expulsive power of a new affection. It is love expelling all its opposition. It is not light wrapping up and concealing darkness, it is light driving the darkness out. Can two walk together unless they be agreed, and is Christ and sin in agreement; are Christ and Belial in a covenant; do righteousness and

unrighteousness accord; can they dwell together in fellowship; is the heart a sort of geological cage where all types of hearts can dwell in peace? No, Christ comes to my heart to purify it, to cleanse it, to lay the axe at the root of the tree, not to lop off a few branches and beautify it by changing its shape, but to pull it up root and branch. O great salvation!

“ Rejoice in hope, rejoice with me,
We shall from all our sins be free.”

And this leads me to say in the fourth place, that the presence of Christ is a hope-giving presence. “Christ in you the hope of glory” is the language of the apostle everywhere. Dwelling in the heart, He constantly reminds us of our immortality, and tells us of the place He has gone to prepare. And there is no firm hope but this, all else guesses and vanities. But by Him despair is banished and victory is won. “The hope of glory!” What is its centre? “We know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” That is it—to be like Him and see Him as He is. That hope has cheered in all ages the lonely pilgrim’s heart, and is it any wonder that it should? If the plant struggles upward to the light, if the mountain river cuts its way through rocks and forest and plain, until it has reached the sea; nay, if the whole race groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, longing for a good which it does not distinctly see, shall not believers for whom that good has taken an obvious form, derive its full realization? And it shall be realized. Christ’s presence now is the ear-

nest of it. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings.

III. The comprehension of love.

You see how the text enlarges and expands. St. Paul's soul, laboring in prayer, soars higher and higher. His tongue is touched with the live coal, and he prays "that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." Love is now the theme in its best and noblest phases. Love is the first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength." Love is the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Do you speak of knowledge ; it comes through love of faith ; it works by love of obedience ; it is prompted by love of the purity of heavenly robes ; it is love of the harmony of music that fills eternal spheres ; it is love of the light that glitters on the throne ; it is love of the bond that unites the whole family on earth and in heaven ; it is the bond of love. Now, listen to the apostle's prayer, "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love." "I seem to see," says one, "that grand old oak ; what a massive stem, girt with a mass of branches, holding up a forest of verdure. What generations have rested under its shadow, and what generations have been carried past it to the churchyard ? How often has the storm visited it, and the tempest wrestled with it ? But there it remains, and there it will remain unmoved, because it is binding at the reservoirs and streams

under the earth. May you be so rooted and grounded in love—for thus grounded in Christ—sending your roots of faith down to the very heart of the Eternal, you may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and to know the love of God which passeth knowledge. Oh, to the measuring line of Zechariah's angel, that we might get some idea of the measurements of love, that we may be able to comprehend the breadth! How vast the field for which love is designed, and for which it provides. God loves all mankind. Go to the heart of Africa; you shall find it there. Go to the islands of the sea; you shall find it there. Go to the millions of China; you shall find it there. Go to the Arctic circle; you shall find it there. Go to the torrid zone; you shall find it there. Love that knows no distinction of time, or race, or condition; that scorns the narrow barriers of sects, of party and of churches—like His own sun in the heavens, shining everywhere and upon all, so that we can say to any individual upon earth, "God loveth thee, and Christ died for thee."

"That we may be able to comprehend the length." What is the duration of love? It is not a thing of to-day, suddenly conceived, and that may suddenly be laid aside. It is from eternity, and has its birth before the foundations of the earth were laid. And if you look forward you shall never see its end, for it is to everlasting. It shall go with you through the whole of your journey. You shall find it when you reach the river's bank; it shall sustain you when all other solaces fail, and when ages after ages have passed away in heaven, that love shall still endure.

"That we may be able to comprehend the depth." How low has God come with that wonderful love of His? That poor drunkard, that prostitute, that culprit in his cell; it comes to these: How deep His love? But shall I gauge it thus? Perhaps, as God measures depth of guilt, some here may be lower than the classes I have named. That culprit, it may be, was brought up to lie, and beg, and steal. His home, if home it could be called, was reeking with the fetid atmosphere of knavery. That prostitute, it may be, was the victim of a devil in human form who betrayed her into sin, and then society cast her out to herd with criminals. That drunkard, it may be, learned to drink at his father's table, and went out from home cursed with a thirst for alcohol. But you are respectable, sober, chaste, kind-hearted, honest. But Christ has been knocking at your heart, and you have said, "I will not let Him in." How low you have sunk in God's estimation, since you have spurned the presence of His Son; and yet to you, whose sin is heightened by your intelligence and respectability, is the word of this salvation sent.

"That we may be able to comprehend the height." Where is the base of the Almighty's throne? How far above the suns and systems sit the white-robed conquerors? In what lofty palaces do the glorified abide? For in the same height of glory to which Christ has gone, to the same height as that throne on which He reigns, to that height of glory He purposes to bring us—a height at which there can be no sin, a height from which every step may be a stepping-stone to

higher glories. As the lark soars and sings, and sings and soars, so shall we ; but not as the lark, which soars aloft but always comes back to earth again.

“And to know the love of Christ.” Not to read about it simply, but to know it—to know it as a life, as an experience—to have it shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost ; to be filled with it, for that is to be filled with all the fulness of God, to walk with God, to commune with God, to be partakers of His divine nature. To know the love of Christ, my brethren, a mere speculative or theoretical knowledge of Christ will not do. It cannot meet the needs of your being. It may answer for a life of morality, for a voyage over life’s seas which has no severe tempests, if mortal ever had such a voyage ; but when in some mighty struggle with the elements, our vessel begins to fill, or when, like Mary and Martha at the grave of Lazarus, we commit from our household a cherished form to the cold keeping of the earth, then we shall need such a knowledge of Christ as shall enable us to say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.” Your worldly and speculative creed may do for life ; but when you go down into the valley of the shadow of death, you will want a strong arm put beneath you, you will want to be borne through the cold waters of death leaning upon the bosom of an Almighty Redeemer. And when you rise from the yielding tomb in the day of His appearing, you will want the Mightiest Advocate with the Father which the universe can afford. You will want pleadings

which only the God-man, pained and bruised for our sakes, can make, that ye may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. No mere paradise this. Too great for human thought to measure, it may be known in the humble, believing heart. The philosopher does not fully understand the source and power of the sun's light and heat, but a child may know that the sun shines, and warm himself in its beams. Is that infatuation? Is that fanaticism? Has not Paul been carried away by his enthusiasm? Listen: "Now, unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end; Amen." Oh, let us this morning pray this prayer; let us open our hearts to receive the answer. Let us do so now.



X.

THE STAR.

“And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.”—MATT. ii. 10.

SPECULATION has been busy about the wise men from the East mentioned in this chapter, and about the star which led them to Bethlehem. Just what the Magi were—priests or astronomers—and from what particular locality they came—Persia, Arabia, or Mesopotamia—we do not with certainty know. Neither can anything positive be stated about the celestial luminary which they so devoutly followed. Some suppose it was a comet, some a special meteor obeying special laws. Kepler, the great astronomer, was led by his calculations to the conclusion that it was a strange conjunction of the three planets, Jupiter, Saturn and Mars, with another strange star, such as has only occurred once since, in the year 1603. Others believe it was a miraculous appearance in the heavens in the form of a star. But all these are suppositions. It is called a star; whether a natural or a supernatural phenomenon I know not. It must have been a star of peculiar brilliance and beauty, the star of Bethlehem, an object of superior lustre distinguishing it from all other constellations in the heavens.

And this at once suggests the first lesson for our thought to-day.

The pre-eminence of Jesus.

You see this pre-eminence first in the Bible, that which distinguishes the Scriptures above all other books is its one great central theme—Jesus. "Christ is the back-bone of the Bible," said a converted pagan. And some one else said, "The Scriptures are the swaddling bands of the Holy Child Jesus." He is the "Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." All within the book is written concerning Him, and it is sealed without with seals, and every seal bears the image and superscription of the King's Son. In olden times, kings were accustomed to send messages to one another by means of running footmen, who carried in their hands lighted torches, and these were met by other footmen who were stationed at intervals, each one kindling his torch at the expiring embers of the last, so that the whole row, from one place to another, was one illuminated avenue, one unbroken line of blazing torches. Cast your eye along the avenue of Scripture: Genesis gives you the seed of the woman, and Exodus the Paschal Lamb, and Leviticus the sacrifices of the tabernacle, and Numbers the cities of refuge, and Deuteronomy the law with its forward look, and thus on through Joshua and the Judges, and Ruth, and the records of the Kings, and Job with his living Redeemer, and David with his royal Son and heir, and all the prophets with eyes peering into the future to see His day, every page aglow with the radiance of

the Sun of Righteousness ; from book to book, from despotism to despotism, until in the last chapter of the last book of Scripture you see all dispensations converge into one golden point, and light and life perfected and consummated in that temple of which it is written, "There shall be no more curse, and there shall be no night there," then lift up your eyes to the central seat of all this glory, and again read the first and the last letters in the alphabet of Scripture, "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Jesus is the star of the Bible.

2. He is pre-eminent in the Church.

The glory of the Bible is Christ ; the glory of the Church is Christ. God hath made Jesus to be head over all things to His Church. A Bible without Christ would be a Bible without meaning, a lighthouse without a light. And a church without Christ would be a church without a foundation, and a candlestick without a lighted candle. What is God's chosen symbol of the Church's true position ? Seven golden candlesticks around a divine centre, from which the lights emanate. Some glory in Paul, some in Apollos, some in Cephas ; others in types and shadows and outward forms. Paul himself said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." A church's glory is worth nothing if it be not the reflected glory of Jesus Christ. The Church, like the moon, shines in borrowed light ; and if we borrow it from any other object than the Sun of Righteousness, God beholds, if we do not, the eclipse of our light and beauty. Christ only is a "light to

lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel."

3. He is pre-eminent in nature.

It is commonly supposed that the Magi were conversant with certain Hebrew prophecies concerning the Messiah, especially that of Balaam, in which it is predicted that a "Star shall come out of Jacob." If they had known nothing of such prophecies, it is hardly likely that the star which they saw would have led them to Christ. As one has said, the "star had the commentary of a revelation from God." Much of the religious value of nature springs mainly from the commentary of a revelation from God. If the one is the picture, the other is the lamp that reveals it. I go out into nature, I look at the hieroglyphics on earth and sky, but cannot interpret them till God's Word helps me. Without its kindly aid a thousand teachings in leaf and grass and flower and bird would never be discerned. It is easy enough to boast of the religious information afforded by the material world, but *are they* found out by those who are ignorant of the inspired record? There is a beautiful little poem of Tennyson's in point here :

" Once in a golden hour,
I cast to earth a seed,
Up there came a flower,
The people said, a weed.

" Then it grew so tall,
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night ;

“ Sowed it far and wide,
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
Splendid is the flower.

“ Read my little fable ;
He that runs may read,
Most can raise the flower now,
For all have got the seed.”

The Bible has sown the seed of thought, but men will not acknowledge their indebtedness. And then, on the other hand—for we must be fair in this matter—while I will not say that education and science add to the beauty of the star, yet they do help men to see it. These Magi were men of science ; and so it is still. Look at the art of printing. Think of the Bible Society supplying copies of the Word of God at the rate of six per minute. More nearly than anything else does the printing-press resemble the “ angel having the everlasting Gospel.” So of steam—how quickly it conveys the missionary ; and the telegraph—its dull, cold wires have flashed the news of mercy to perishing sinners. I read some time ago of a man in India who was seized with a fatal malady. The prospect of death revealed his unfitness. No Christian was near ; no missionary within many miles. A message was sent to him by telegraph : “ What must I do to be saved ? ” Soon after replies came in the same silent way : “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” “ He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.”

4. He is pre-eminent in the heart.

Jesus is the star of the Bible, the star of the Church, the star of nature, and the star of the heart. Revelation calls Him the "Morning Star." Who sees the morning star, but the wakeful; and who are the wakeful, but the watchers, they that watch for the morning? And what prompts to watchfulness? Love does. And where do we look for love, all sensitively glowing and keenly watchful? Why, in the expectant and waiting Bride. And what thus rules the heart? It is the sceptre of love. "There shall come a star out of Jacob and a sceptre out of Israel." The star and the sceptre must go together; the one to attract the heart, the other to rule it. The sceptre thus crowned and the crown thus sceptred, will turn away our eyes from beholding vanity and keep our hearts from going to sleep. And concerning every such faithful one, the Saviour says, "I will give him the morning star." And surely the fulfilment of this promise will be the consummation of the Church's yearnings and the final answer of her prayers, the divine Bridegroom will give Himself. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, that where Thou art we may be also; that lifted up from the world's dark night, we may shine with Thee in the kingdom of Thy Father, when Thou shalt come to usher in the "morning without clouds." All that the heart longs for centres in Jesus. What Peter says about the Scripture may be said of Him. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your

hearts." "A light that shineth in a dark place." How truly descriptive of Christ that is. The heart wanted to know the divine character, and Christ lets light shine on it. "The world by wisdom," etc. Clouds and darkness were round about his moral glories. But Christ dispelled the darkness. The glory of God, like a mild and lustrous star, shines in the face of Jesus Christ—the light of love. And the heart wants light to shine on the dark ocean of our being; and Jesus comes to do that, to reveal to us our dangers, the dark depths of our sinfulness, the utter disqualification of a sinful nature for the presence of light and purity; to declare to us the only ground of our salvation, the only path of safety; to offer Himself as the Father's great gift, heaven's life-boat to rescue the perishing and save from fatal shipwreck. And then the heart wanted light to shine upon the future, and Christ did that. He brought life and immortality to light through His Gospel. What a beautiful immortality! "In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you." "I go to prepare a place for you." "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." "Sown in corruption; raised in incorruption." An artist once drew a picture. It represented a night scene. A man is rowing a little skiff across a lake, the wind is high and stormy; the billows, white and crested, rage round his frail bark; and not a star save one, shines through the angry sky. But on that lone star the voyager fixes his eye, and keeps rowing away, on, on, on through the midnight storm. And written beneath the picture were these words: "If I lose that, I'm lost!" You are that lonely voyager on life's rough

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sea. Sin is the dark rock that threatens your ruin. Jesus is your soul's pole-star—a light that shineth in a dark place—your only light. If you lose that, you are lost. Steer by it, and by-and-by you will be safely landed on the golden shore.

5. Jesus is pre-eminent as the object of faith.

The faith of these wise men, like its object, was illustrious. They had to encounter difficulties in the pursuit of their object. There were geographical difficulties. The path through which they journeyed was beset by dangers, and infested with robbers. There were intellectual difficulties. A considerable degree of uncertainty attended their mission, and careful inquiries had to be made as to the precise time and locality of the Saviour's birth. Yet, in spite of these difficulties, their faith was strong. Were they living in our day, they would laugh at the objections which so-called wise men raise against the Bible. They were probably rich men as well as wise, men of rank and renown. If so, their conduct was a sublime commentary on the words of Jeremiah: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches." Had they given themselves to some mission of vain fancies, wild and extravagant theories, they would have labored in vain, and spent their strength for naught. Or had they occupied their attention with some terrestrial instead of celestial object, looking downward instead of upward, they might have lost their guide, and returned home with shame and disappointment. But their interest and gaze were con-

centrated. One star of all the heavenly host could fix their wondering eyes, and with a gaze thus riveted they illustrated the literal rendering, "Looking off unto Jesus."

Lastly, Christ is pre-eminent as the source of joy.

Herod was troubled; the wise men "rejoiced." Rejection of Christ always brings trouble; His reception always brings joy. The text denotes an ecstasy of joy. Like the joy of mariners after a tempestuous voyage, like the joy of harvest after the husbandman's fears are allayed, like the morning of joy after the night of weeping. Everything about the advent of Christ was joyful. Angels, Anna the prophetess, Simeon, John the Baptist. Everything about the Gospel is joyous. There was joy at Samaria when Philip went down to that city and preached Christ. "There was great joy in that city." When the eunuch believed in Jesus, "he went on his way rejoicing." When the Philippian jailer was converted, "he rejoiced, with all his house, believing in God." Ours is an evangel of gladness. The songs we sing to-day are songs of triumph; the hopes we entertain are lively hopes. Christmas is always a glad season. Its blessed memories, touched, though some of them may be, with sadness, are yet more joyous than sad. The children are all glad, and as we enter into their glee, and find a pleasure in the joy of their young hearts as they play with their toys, we grow young again. Oh, let us be glad to-day!

And let us worship to-day. "The wise men did present unto Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh."

XI.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

“Master, it is good for us to be here.”—MARK ix. 5.

IN directing your attention to these words and the marvellous scene with which they are identified, we shall notice :

I. Reasons why it was good to be on the Mount of Transfiguration.

II. Look at the instruction which the subject ministers to us.

I. Reasons why it was good to be on the Mount of Transfiguration.

1. Christ was there. To the godless the thought of the presence of Christ is irksome and unwelcome; it troubles and rebukes him, tends to check him in his evil ways, and to mar the pleasure of his most secret sins. But the believer is drawn to Christ by all the tendencies of his Christianized nature. He feels at home in all scenes and services in which Christ makes Himself manifest. He is ever seeking Jesus who was crucified, and when he finds Him “his heart is glad, and his glory rejoiceth.” “The King brought me into His chamber; I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the ban-

queting house, and the banner over me was love." Peter was on the top of a mount which, perhaps, was bleak and cold ; but he was with Christ, and that was enough. He had a heart to which Christ was all—a heart to which the presence of Jesus would have converted a Luz into a Bethel, a dungeon into a palace ; a heart which could conceive no higher anticipation than being ever with the Lord—and therefore he could speak, not only for himself but for his brethren, and say, "It is good for us to be here." And not only was Christ on the mount, but He was there in an extraordinary state. "He was transfigured before them." He was transformed—suddenly, miraculously transformed. His person became luminous for the occasion. The glory of His person burst through His simple attire, the essential glory of "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" broke through the veil which He had thrown over it in His state of humiliation, manifesting Him to be "the Son of God, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person." And not only that, but there was the mediatorial glory of Christ—the glory which was to follow His sufferings, and into which He hath entered. There was given both to Him and to the disciples a prelude and an earnest of it, given no doubt to prepare them for the scenes of unparalleled sufferings through which this glory was to be reached. And if it be asked what was the appearance of Christ upon the mount, perhaps the best answer would be in the words of the first vision which John had in Patmos of the Son of Man in His glory. (Rev. i. 12-17.) Such was the glory into which

Christ was for a little transformed on the mount, and no wonder Peter said, "It is good for us to be here." Was it good for Moses to hide in the cleft of the rock, and see a part of the glory of God passing by; was it good for David "to dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold His beauty and to inquire in His temple?" Were these holy men in such experiences as these brought to the "gate of heaven?" Peter, James and John, as it were passed through the gate, and had for a moment a glimpse of "the glory that shall be revealed"—a prelibation such as had never before in all respects been enjoyed on earth.

2. Moses and Elias were there. Moses, the founder of the Jewish polity and the giver of the law; and Elijah, the restorer of the law, and the most zealous reformer and prophet of its times. Moses, the typical head of the legal dispensation; and Elijah, the acknowledged chief of the prophets, were on the mount to do homage to Christ, and in the act show that the law and the prophets gave witness to Him. They laid down their commission at His feet, crying, "Hear Him," declaring that Christ was the end of the former systems now waxing old. All the influences of law and all the influences of preceding history, met together in the persons of Moses and Elias, to do honor to Christ. Moses and Elias appeared, and they appeared in glory, clad in the heavenly garb, fragrant with the spices of the better country. They were human beings on earth, with nothing earthly about them. Elijah appeared in that body which flashed through all the changes meet for heaven, the moment he stepped into the fiery

chariot ; and the body of Moses—brought from the valley in the land of Moab expressly for this occasion, and when the moments of rapture were passed, conveyed back again over against Beth-peor—appeared, as it will on the morning of the resurrection, when this mortal shall put on immortality. And surely, next to fellowship with Christ, it was good to hold communion with Moses and Elias. To commune with them in this representation of the Church in heaven and the Church on earth, met in high congress for purposes so transcendently important, to witness them doing honor to Jesus, not only as ransomed sinners, but as official men, whose whole ministry found in Him its substance and end, and derived from Him its value and significance, and to hear them talking of His decease. How transporting !

3. The cloud of glory was there. Matthew says : “ A bright cloud overshadowed them.” It was the emblem of the Divine presence which dwelt first in the tabernacle and after that in the temple. In the present instance it was the symbol of the presence of God the Father who came down and made this special manifestation of Himself for the purpose of bearing testimony to His Son. And it was a “ bright cloud.” We are struck at once by the contrast between it and those clouds symbolical of the olden covenant. They were usually thick and dark, for the Lord said He would dwell in thick darkness—fit emblems of the dispensation to which they belonged ; a dispensation of darkness, terror and bondage, in which the God of Israel was comparatively a “ God that hid Himself.” What a

grand passage is that in Hebrews, in which the apostle contrasts the two dispensations: "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched," etc. (Heb. xii. 18-22.) Agreeably with this and as emblematical of it, the cloud upon the Mount of Transfiguration was a cloud without darkness, a cloud of light, pure and powerful, and yet probably so soft and kindly that the eye could repose on it with ease and delight. Fit emblem of the Gospel dispensation, which is pre-eminently a dispensation of light and liberty and joy, in which "The only begotten which is in the bosom of the Father hath declared Him," which is the ministration of the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, and in which "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

4. The voice from the cloud was there. A voice not like that which under Moses issued from the cloudy pillar amidst thunders and lightnings and tempests; but a "still small voice," like that which Elias heard in his day when he stood on Horeb. That voice made all that was seen in the mount vocal with glory, it gave a tongue to all the glory of the scene, when it said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear Him." "Hear Him." Listen attentively and reverently to Him, implicitly believe Him, cordially and diligently obey Him. On all matters of religious belief and practice, hear Him; He is the only Lord of the conscience, the only King of the Church, the only competent and legitimate Monarch of the

mind and heart. Look no more to Moses and Elias. He of whom they spake is come; come to teach, come to give the law, and come to propitiate. He is a Prophet and a King as well as a Priest. Hear Him and live, for all who refuse to hear shall perish.

5. There was much of heaven there. Do you speak of the glory of heaven? Christ on the mount is in His glory—His face shining as the sun, His raiment white as the light. Moses and Elias appeared in glory, and the cloud of the glory of the Lord covers the mount. Do you speak of the mutual recognition of saints in heaven? Peter, James and John knew Moses and Elias, though they had never seen their face in the flesh, and felt it such rapture to be in their company that they could not brook the thought of parting. Do you speak of the great absorbing theme of heaven? On the mount "they talked with Jesus and spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." This is heaven's absorbing theme—the theme that fills every heart and employs every tongue. The anthem of the redeemed, as John heard it in Patmos, was, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 9, 10.) May we not say, then, putting all these things together, they had abundant reason for saying, "Master, it is good for us to be here?"

II. The instruction ministered.

1. The transfiguration imparts the character of reality to the spiritual life. There are two questions perpetually suggesting themselves to us: first, Do the departed dead lose all interest in the world they have left behind? and secondly, Where are the departed? In regard to the first question, Moses and Elias appear here conversing with Jesus, on the event which most deeply concerned the welfare of mankind. And they were representative men of the Hebrew race, and thus it was a visible exhibition of the interest taken by the inhabitants of heaven in the welfare of earth. And then, as to the second question, may we not be warranted in believing that often, at all events, the spirits of the departed are around us, and hid from us only by the veil of the senses? The appearance to the disciples was miraculous, but they themselves were the subjects of the miracle. It was their eyes which were opened, and being opened they beheld what was already there—like the young man who beheld the hills round Mount Zion filled with chariots and hosts of the Lord. When death comes with its miraculous awakening; when it couches these eyes of sense, we may behold, not Moses and Elias only, but the innumerable company of the departed, hid from us now by the very senses that reveal the world of matter. And in the fact that Moses and Elias retained their interest in this world and felt a sympathy in Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of the world, I would see the illustration of a universal fact, that they who advance onward into higher worlds

lose neither the memory nor the affections which united them to those whom they have left behind.

2. The transfiguration may serve to correct our worldly estimate of things, and give us an idea of what is most interesting in heaven's sight. It was not in the season of triumph, but in the hour of mental struggle and agony, that divine manifestations were vouchsafed to Christ. At that time some of the greatest events were transacting that the world has ever seen; but the heavenly visitants passed over cities and palaces, banded leaders and ambitious legions, to pause on a solitary hill-top of Judea, where a man was dedicating himself to death. Judea itself was hardly to be recognized on the map of the world. The spectacle of the wearied pilgrim, kneeling under the stars and praying, while three tired followers slept, was not one to attract the gaze of mankind. And yet to that scene came the inhabitants of heaven. To human eyes nothing could have seemed less important than what took place in the soul of Him who bowed before God in the night dews of that lonely hill. But to Him who sees the beginning and the end, there was a turning-point of the world's history. And such it has proved. The glory of the Cæsars has crumbled, but the self-consecration of Hermon and Gethsemane has been the regeneration of hope of mankind. I have read of a picture which is a remarkable commentary on this event. The artist unites with it the event which, during the Saviour's absence, was transpiring at the foot of the mountain. A maniac is there, brought to the disciples to be healed.

The worst form of human misery, the anguish of the affections, the imploring cry for help, the ineffectual efforts to give relief, are all blended in that scene, which represents the struggles, sorrows, darkness, and weakness of earth; while above in the serene heavens the glorified form of the Saviour appears with His celestial companions. Earthly trial finding its consummation in heavenly peace; that is the artist's idea. He would not confine his thought to this present life, but carry it onward to the end. Very false is the view when confined to the present life. That present life is a fragment—like the fragment of a marble slab which the antiquary discovers written over by some baffling inscription. Broken across, the half-lines are unintelligible, but let the other fragment be found and annexed, and at once the record is to those who now read as to those who first wrote it. That is an important lesson of the transfiguration. As the Saviour passes up from the dark woes of earth into the holy communion of the mount, we have an emblem of what shall be the case of every true life. First toil, then rest; first seed-time, then harvest; first trial, then transfiguration. Where there is fidelity to God, life shall be a constant transfiguration. Self-sacrifice is transfigured into disinterestedness; conflict with temptation, into strength of soul; bodily pain, into spiritual fortitude; sorrow, into trust and faith.

“Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place;
Till we cast our crowns before Him,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

Oh, when we stand on the other side of the veil, what transformations shall we behold ! Here we witnessed those whose lives seemed blighted by trial ; there, the sickness, the burden, the limitation all dropped, they appear as the angels. Old age, worn and wasted, stoops and drinks what seemed the waters of death, but these transfigured, finds it was the fountain of perpetual youth. The miracle of the transfiguration becomes universal—the deaf hear, the blind see, and every righteous purpose, though it seem to fail on earth, is seen to have been tending to its full accomplishment.

3. You will observe that this event came to the Saviour under peculiar circumstances—at the time when, on the one side, His soul was most tried, and when, on the other, there was the most devout dedication of Himself to God, in view of certain duties. If you look at the Saviour's history, you see that at the time of His baptism, when He was separated from the world for His great work ; and after the forty days in the wilderness, when He took the final step from retirement into the world ; and when the time approached for His death, and in Gethsemane, when looking forward to the agonies to which He was surrendering Himself, these were occasions on which special aids were given to Him. Now, these divine interpositions were not fortuitous, but in all cases were in response to acts of self-consecration to God and human good. It was when His soul was lifted up in prayer that the divine help came to Him. Oh, when we surrender ourselves to the world we must look for help only to the sovereign that we serve ! If we serve

Mammon, we must look for that aid only which mammon gives his servants. We withdraw ourselves from God and from His influences. But when, in faith and holy purpose, we draw near God, God will be sacredly near us. Like the prophet of old, when we lay our offering on the altar fire descends on it from heaven. Let these thoughts encourage us. The heavenly visitants appeared on the mount, not to save Christ from suffering, not to suggest the possibility of avoiding it, but to express the sympathy of heaven as He went forward to meet it. No angels came down with flaming swords when He was betrayed; no Elias descended to bear Him unharmed from the cross; but these manifestations were given to give Him strength, to fortify Him for oncoming trials. You have trials to bear, and some of them are encountered in the discharge of the most sacred duties, and might be avoided by guiltily avoiding the duty; and it may be that sometimes the question actually presents itself, "Might I not be justified in evading the duty, since its discharge is such a cross?" That question we answer by asking another, "What is one to seek first in life—happiness or the will of God?" Are we to murmur and repine at the trials encountered in the loyal service of our Maker, or are we to regard such wounds and scars as honorable witnesses to our fidelity? Now, the whole life of Christ teaches us to think only of the duty. Come what may between, our purpose is to accomplish God's will. Look at life's trials and crosses, which must be met if life's work is done, in no ignoble spirit, but look at them as they are. You need not make believe that trial is not trial, pain not pain; but say to

yourself. Here are trials which I must meet, I can avoid the cross only by avoiding the duty, and, God helping me, I will not do that. Following the Saviour, I will pray, not "Save me from this hour," but "Help me to do Thy will." Have this spirit, and there shall come to you seasons of renewals and strength from on high, seasons when to you the world is transfigured, seasons when God shall draw near to you with special manifestations of His love and grace. But, mark you, these seasons when the soul is most lifted up above the earth and its fears, will be those when there is the truest consecration of yourself to God. And those seasons, the highest and holiest of life, will not suggest methods of escape from duty and trial, but encourage you with a brave and cheerful fortitude to go on to the accomplishment of duty. Fear not for awhile to travel a rocky and thorny road, if it be the one which heaven has appointed, "Master, it is good: let us abide and build." But the Master saw there was hard work in the valley to do. Peter's mistake in wishing to stay on the mount, enjoying at once beforehand that release from labor and suffering and that communion with glorified saints which was in store for him when, after long years of toil and trial, he should put off this tabernacle, was precisely the grand mistake which in later times made Christians turn hermits, monks and nuns, thinking that the best way to be separate from the world is to get out of the world. Happily, Christ was at hand to correct the disciple's error, and lead him down again to the level of common duty and experience. Worship and holy contemplation are to the spiritual life what air and food are to the bodily—not

its end, but the means of its activity and health. Not prayer in the neglect of work, but work in the spirit of prayer, is the true idea of Christian life. The Mount of Transfiguration stood to Christ but once in the whole path between Bethlehem and Calvary ; and to us these seasons of rapt communion are occasional, and ever lie between points of duty. And now, brethren, if a brief vision of heavenly glory during one summer night made the disciples willing, though still in the body, to forget and forego all earthly ties, what must be the attractive power and satisfying joy of the full communion with the spirits of just men made perfect and the vision of the Lord Jesus in the glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world ? To see Him, not on a rugged Judean hill, but on sunlit slopes of Paradise ; to behold Him, not with eyes that break down with excess of light, but made strong by immortality ; to abide with Him, not through the hours of a single night, but through the perpetual unfoldings of an eternal day ; to witness and hold converse, not only with Moses and Elias, but with the whole company of the glorified, and particularly with those who on earth were bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, who lived in our homes and ate at our tables, surely " Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Let us wait, and while waiting seek to be transfigured into spiritual fellowship with the Redeemer's nature, that, being transfigured with Him by the Spirit of His grace, we may also share the transfiguration of His glory.

XII.

“THE WISDOM OF PREFERRING THE HEAVENLY.”

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”
—Col. iii. 2.

I WISH, in commencing, to note an incorrect application of this text, that generally obtains. The common interpretation is, that it is our duty to set our affections more on the heavenly than on the earthly, and that when the things above and the things on the earth come into competition, it is the earthly that must be sacrificed. Now, while this interpretation is true as far as it goes, yet it is not exactly the truth chiefly indicated by the apostle. The plain meaning is, that we are not to set our affections, in the way of choosing a portion for ourselves, on earthly things at all, but consecrate them individually to things above, that we should have only one object for our aim, and that the heavenly inheritance. But while this is the case, while we are forbidden to set our affections on any earthly object *for its own sake*, still it may be our duty to labor to gain it, as being related to the heavenly, and helpful in its acquisition. The subject, then, for our consideration to-night is:—

The wisdom of preferring the things above, to the things on the earth, as the pursuit of our life and heart.

1. Our first illustration of this proposition is—that if two objects allowed or supposed to be of equal value, present themselves for our choice, but with this condition, that in pursuit of one of them we lose the other, whereas in pursuing that other, we may not only gain itself, but a large share, if not the whole, of its competitor—we will, if wise, at once choose it as the pursuit of life. This, I fancy, commends itself to every person here. But is it not precisely the state of matters in the pursuit of the earthly and heavenly things mentioned in our text? If a man choose the earthly, he can obtain none of the heavenly in the smallest measure; whereas in choosing the heavenly, he will probably gain much of the earthly. The solemn, but alas, the forgotten fact is, that nothing, absolutely nothing, of the heavenly inheritance, the inheritance that endures after earthly objects have all been resolved into their original elements, lie, in the way of the worldling, as he pursues his object. But much of the earthly portion lies in the way of the saint as he pursues his object. The delights and honors of literature and science, enjoyments of the tasteful arts, family endearments in all their various luxury, eminent place at the bar or in the college, or in the magistracy of the city, or in the legislature of parliament—all this and more *may* lie in his way of enjoyment, as he pursues his heavenward journey. I might take higher ground than this, and maintain that the choice of the heavenly portion is the more promising way of obtaining the earthly, on account of the greater prudence and superior morality which the choice

inspires yea, higher than this still, that it is the *only* way of finding satisfaction in earthly things after they have been acquired, without which satisfaction they might as well never have been gained. But I am content with the qualified form of the proposition, that the worldling cannot have any share of the saint's portion; while the saint, having chosen the heavenly, may and will obtain a share of the worldling's portion, and hence we say—heavenly mindedness is wisdom, worldly mindedness is folly.

2. When two objects compete for our pursuit—still supposing them to be equally valuable—we will, if wise, prefer that which we are *sure* our diligence will attain, and reject that as to whose possession there is a doubt. Now let me apply this to the heavenly and earthly portions. Let me suppose one of you young men to have chosen the earthly, and see if there is no gambler's work that you are making of the race for happiness. First of all, less than the threescore years and ten would not satisfy you for a term of life, and they must all, or mostly, be years of unbroken health besides. How small is your chance for all that? Then, in defiance of all the seductions by which you will be assailed, you must maintain a respectable character for purity and integrity of morals, the expectation of which requires considerable self-confidence in one who has no faith in the sustaining help of the Spirit of God. And then, you must have thirty years or more of prosperous merchandise, arrested in its career by no frauds, failures or general mercantile disasters, for gaining that fancied fortune on which, secured

beyond the possibility of loss, you propose to retire to spend those fancied days of old age in fancied ease and honor. And then, this earthly portion which you have chosen, must surely include the item of domestic happiness, implying that your choice of a companion, from amid the dancing circle of worldlings of course, shall not prove a bitter deception ; that no child of yours shall die, without your having the pain alleviated by the christian's hope ; and that no son or daughter, ill-educated though they be by an ungodly father—I mean yourself—shall anguish your heart and poison your life with their shame, yea, their abuse of yourself. O my brother, how sad that your hopes of happiness, according to your own estimate of what happiness is, should depend on such chances as these ; and what wild confidence you must have in the throw of the dice-box, to be sure of the realization of your fancy !

Now, look across the desk to your companion, who by his sanctification of the Sabbath, observance of the sacraments, his reading of the Word, his attendance at the prayer-meeting, and his whole life conduct, gives evidence of his having chosen the heavenly as his portion. His literary acquirements are equal to your own, he equals you in every graceful and manly quality, he is your compeer in business tactics, and should the hour of battle come, in your country's defence, you will be glad to fight by his side. Now, mark you, while there is so much uncertainty that you shall ever gain that earthly portion which you have chosen as the object of your life pursuit, so that

there is a possibility of being a fretful, miserable old man if your life be protracted, complaining that all your labor has been lost, he, on the other hand, is certain that being faithful, as he is resolved to be, he will secure the object of his choice. He holds his heritage by no uncertain tenure. His security is the divine promise, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." His hopes for long life, health and wealth, and family happiness, are as well founded as your own, and in addition he is sure to be saved at last. May I not well, therefore, pray of you, "O that you were wise to know your gracious day?"

3. Still supposing that the two objects that compete for our favor are equally valuable, and admitting, too, that diligence in the pursuit will certainly be crowned with success, wisdom will prefer that which requires the less amount of labor. Apply this now to the earthly and the heavenly things. What skilfulness and scheming, what racing, what anxiety, by day and by night, are necessary for gaining a fortune! As a usual thing, the hardest-worked men are our successful business men. And then I think, hard as it is to *gain* the earthly portion, it is often far harder to *retain* it. As property accumulates, cares increase, the brain is taxed, and the nerve is taxed; and not unfrequently the men who thought if they could reach just a certain position they would be easy and content, find, when that position is gained, that they were actually happier while in a lower place. I do not wish in any way to say, as contradistinguished

from this sore travail of the world, that a Christian life is a life of sloth and inactive ease. On the contrary, it is a life of constant, unwearied industry. But mark the difference. When the life of a mere worldling is throughout, a life of grinding slavery, much of the saint's work consists of peaceful meditation, of sympathetic intercourse with the poor and afflicted, and communion with Christian brethren in devising and executing schemes of benevolence. Not a little of all this is felt to be of the nature of pastime rather than of labor.

But just here I can imagine some one objecting, What about all this godly sorrow and mental darkness that I have heard you speak about in connection with the commencement of this heavenly pursuit? Well, I reply, is it not reasonable and fitting that a rebel should tremble and fear? We do indeed *contend* for sorrow after a godly sort, in commencing a religious course; but it does not follow from this that a religious life is an unhappy one. Even in that bruisedness of spirit there is a relief, a satisfaction exceeding anything that can be found in a course of sin. Jesus said, "Blessed"—not wretched—"are they that mourn." And let me say, too, that this penitent is not mourning because he has religion, but because he wants it; he does not weep because he loves God, but because he does not love God. And then let me observe that if that mental distress be lasting, it is the sufferer's own fault; it is not imputable to this Bible which awoke him to a sense of his condition; for having disclosed his danger, it pointed him to a way

of escape. And I repeat that it is the fault of his own unbelieving heart if he remain for an hour under the thunderings of Sinai, and find not peace under the shelter of the cross. On the day of Pentecost, when the souls pricked by the Word cried out, "What shall we do?" they were forthwith converted and added to the Church. I remark additionally, that even when the Church is burdened with the discredit of many cases of melancholy which the worldling laughs at, yet mental distress—and the very statistics of the asylums prove this—mental distress, derangement and suicide abound to a far greater extent among worldly men than among those who profess the faith. Religion in its very nature is calculated to soothe, and by its freedom from all excesses, tends to quiet and length of life. On the simple ground, therefore, of mental ease and quiet, that man is wise only who chooses the heavenly portion.

4. So far we have proceeded on the assumption that the two portions are of equal value, and even thus, we have seen that wisdom would prefer the heavenly. But the supposition is most preposterous. There is, indeed, a kind of profanity in making it. I therefore remark now, that though the pursuit of the heavenly excluded all participation in the earthly, though there were uncertainty in its attainment, and though the toil of its pursuit exceeded in heaviness the toil in gaining and keeping earthly, yet true wisdom would say, "Set your affections on things above." The earthly is for the body only; the heavenly is for both body and soul in a state of refined susceptibility and enlarged capacity. The one contains only the praise of man; the

other, the best of human praises and the benediction of God. The one contains the endearments of family joys for a season; the other contains their restoration after death. The one is a portion for a few years only; the other is an inheritance for eternity.

Do you say that the earthly inheritance is to be *presently* enjoyed, while the heavenly lies in the future? Well, if that were true, it would be an argument only for a child. You might perplex him with the choice of a penny to be spent on apples to-day and the pound to be received to-morrow. But you would not insult a full-grown man with the proposition. And yet how many men act the child's part in grasping at to-day's copper in despite of to-morrow's golden pound! Ah! when to-morrow comes, how will they weep like children for the folly of their choice! But then, the whole of the heavenly portion is not in the future, in the sense of the divine love, in the delight experienced in the conscientious discharge of duty, in the feast of a contented mind, in the happy ordinances of the Church, and in the raptures of that hope which will sometimes make the kingdom shine above and all around the meditative saint, in these it is to a considerable extent *presently* enjoyed. Nor may the worldling mock at the superstition of all this. The question is about *experienced* happiness, and if these raptures be a delusion, it is a delusion under the brightness of whose cloud he might well wish that his own dark and troubled spirit were introduced, to lie down and enjoy the Tabor-like vision.

5. When, of two objects competing for our choice one is absolutely necessary to our happiness, so tha

without it we would perish, the other would be only a temporary convenience, would it not be madness to hesitate in making an election? Yet this is a correct representation of the relative value of "the things above" and "the things on earth." Unless a man secure the former, he perishes forever; and the best that can be said of the latter is that they are pleasant conveniences for a brief season. The question, then, may be proposed, Which would you rather have, fifty years of poverty and contempt, to put it to the worst, and the glory of heaven afterwards; or fifty years of luxurious sensual gratification, but the doom of hell afterwards? The fortune of Lazarus and the fortune of Dives—they are both exposed for purchase in the auction mart of life, and every soul here is bidding for the one or the other now. My brother, your present action is either tending to secure the felicities of heaven or the agonies of hell. Which is it? Written clearly on the sacred page is the fact, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

I have by no means exhausted this subject, nor drawn as many contrasts between the earthly and the heavenly as I might have drawn; but I turn and change my tone, and earnestly exhort you to seek the heavenly inheritance. Bear in mind that God's Word not only advises and recommends—it enjoins, it imperatively commands this course of conduct. The old maxim that a man may do with his own *fields* what he pleases, has been justly reprobated; but there is another error that needs exposure, that a man may do what he pleases with *himself*. No, verily, we are not our own property; we are the property of that God

who made us, and are accountable to Him for the manner in which we manage ourselves as His estate or inheritance, that He may have honor in us and fruit from us. The God who made you commands you to seek the heavenly; the God in whom you live and move and have your being, commands it; the God who will be your Judge at the last day commands it; and will you withstand His authority? Will not the positive command of the Great Eternal bind you? I beseech you further to consider the danger and wickedness of delay in this matter. You purpose at some future time to turn to God, but alas, in the meantime you are defrauding your Maker of the service which you owe Him. If ever you are bound to serve Him, it is now. If ever He is worthy of your love, He is worthy now. If you would shudder at the thought of remaining His enemies to eternity, why continue His enemies for a day? In this you are going directly in the face of the earnest entreaty, "To-day, if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts." All this time you are walking over the grave, and should you suddenly fall into it, what then, what then, what then? You would not act thus in worldly matters. If all your property were thus exposed, you would not sleep. You would compass sea and land to make your title sure. How comes it, then, to pass that in the very case which calls loudest for anxiety, there you are the most secure. My dear hearers, are you immortal? Are you to spend an eternity in heaven or in hell? And are you losing yourselves among the vanities of the world? Will you never wake? Sleep on, then, and take your rest.

But know you that the mists of death will soon gather round you. You will be laid upon a dying bed. Time is gone, and eternity has come. I see you lying there, without a friend to help you in heaven or earth. I see you cast back your eyes on misspent Sabbaths, on murdered privileges, on wasted time. You remember the calls you once rejected. I hear you cry, "I had a soul, but I prized it not, and now my soul is gone. Ten thousand worlds for one more Sabbath, yea, for one more hour." I look a little further, and I see the perturbations of a troubled sky. The sign of the Son of man appears in heaven. The last trumpet sounds. That body which had been committed to the grave is organized afresh. It opens its eyes on the strange commotions of a dissolving world. It is forced to ascend. The judgment seat is set in the clouds of heaven, and the books are opened. I hear you cry to rocks and mountains to cover you; but rocks and mountains are sunk in the general ruin. The books are opened, and on a black page are written all the sins of your life. That page is held up before a frowning universe. The judgment ended, the Judge prepares to speak. Eternal justice lowers on His brow; His right hand grasps ten thousand thunders; with a look before which heaven and earth flee away, He turns full upon His foes, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." But I return, and blessed be God, I find myself on praying ground, and my hearers about me. This is not the Judgment Day. But I expect soon to meet you at that bar, and give an account of my labors among you this night and during the past year.

XIII.

CONSECRATION.

"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts."—ZECH. xiv. 20, 21.

THE picture presented by our text is beautiful and significant. Judah was the country of God's people; Jerusalem, the seat of His worship. The temple was solemnly set apart to holy purposes; the priesthood were separated to the performances of sacred services; the high priest, particularly, was marked by a golden frontlet on his mitre, bearing the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." Now, it was the will of God that all the people, their country and their transactions, should be in like manner consecrated, so that even the bells of the horses—or literally, their trappings—should bear the motto, "Holiness to the Lord." And as common things should be made sacred, so sacred things should be multiplied and occupy a place of augmented importance. The meaner vessels of the sanctuary should be enlarged to the dimensions of the larger and costlier vessels of the altar. "The pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar." And not only in the temple, but

every common vessel in every ordinary dwelling should be like the sacred vessels of the temple. "Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." Yea, such shall be their consecration, that the meat of the sacred feasts shall be boiled in the common vessels of the holy people. And finally, all who should desecrate the holy scene and service shall be kept aloof. "There shall be no more the Canaanite," or, as some render it, "There shall be no more the trafficker in the house of the Lord of hosts." The subject, then, for our morning meditation, is "Consecration to God."

1. We are to contemplate the view which the text gives of consecration to God.

The primary element of consecration is personal dedication to the divine service. I fear that religion is too often regarded rather as a state of security and as a sort of negative sanctification, than as a state of holy devotedness to God. It is not enough for you to flee to religion as a sanctuary from the curse; it must be a devotement of being and faculty to God. It is not enough that you are good fathers, masters, children, citizens and servants. Christianity will make you these, but it will make you much more—it will make you feel that life is given, salvation vouchsafed, and grace conferred, that you may be given up in dedication to Christ. Earth will not appear to you an outpost of the universe, where you are merely to

occupy a trust, but a precinct of God's temple, where you are to serve Him. You are not merely husbandmen, who are to work diligently and to pay a rental to the Great Proprietor; but you are priests, who are to serve and honor Him as the very office of your entire being, for, as an apostle puts it, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." This dedication originates in the renewing grace of God. The materials of the temple were of common earth; the family of Aaron was of the sinful stock; but both were separated by the divine will to their hallowed purpose. So with you. You were estranged from God, but you have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ. All was earthly, grace has produced heavenly-mindedness; there was the minding of the flesh, now there is the minding of the Spirit; there was no fellowship with God, no spiritual worship, now the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, the regenerate man is the priest of God. The Holy Ghost has set apart the nature thus regenerated by the holy anointing of His influence, even as the apostle says, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

This dedication is graciously accepted of God, as it has been made in faith in His Son. God accepted the tabernacle, the temple, the priests, the Jewish people,

by sacrifice, wherein atonement was made for the materials of the one and for the sins of the other. When Jesus died, it was as the Mediator and Surety of men; His death was an atonement for sin, the medium of our return, the basis of our acceptance. On the day of His death the holy fire came down; it kindled upon His holy humanity, and God accepted His sacrificial offering. Now He is well pleased for His righteousness' sake. All that believe are accepted in the Beloved, and "we glory in God through Christ Jesus, by whom we have now received the atonement." Faith not merely trusts in the atonement for the remission of the penalty, but also trusts in it as the ground of acceptance, and comes and consecrates the life on the altar which sanctifies the gift and the giver. Ye yield your own selves to the Lord; ye have consecrated yourselves; dead with Christ to the world, alive with Christ to God. Finally, this dedication is formally expressed by profession. When you joined the Church, it was professedly a surrender of yourselves to God's service—a separation from the world, an avowal of discipleship. It was a profession that henceforth you would be wholly God's, that this world's business, manufacture, merchandise, should be the mere accidents; your end should be to serve God, and that every service, secular or sacred, should have the frontlet in legible letters, "Holiness unto the Lord." Now, this is the fundamental idea of consecration—personal dedication to God's service.

2. Such a consecration will evince itself in practical conformity to the divine will, in the discharge of those

duties which belong to our several positions in life. It seems to be the will of Providence that men should occupy different stations, fill different departments and hold different ranks in the world. Religion does not abolish these, but it sanctifies them. I go to the lowest walks of life. I see a large number of poor in the Church, toiling for bread, occupied in services of the veriest manual labor. But let them take their station and regard its duties as laid upon them by the God of Providence, and then diligence, fidelity, manual skill, will become so many modes of serving God. If an angel were sent down from heaven to occupy some service of toil, he would feel that its toil was just the task assigned of God; and when Christians feel that they are doing what God has rendered the duty of their calling, if they do it as a duty, so as to fulfil its requirements to the best of their power, it becomes a sacred act. I like to think of this. Then the errand boy runs upon a divine commission; the servant sweeps the house as a sacred duty; the laborer bears the burden as a priest of the Lord's house. I would have the Christian workman, if possible, the most skilful, certainly the most diligent and faithful; the Christian servant the most trustworthy of servants. There is no lawful occupation beneath a Christian, when he may inscribe on every implement, "Holiness to the Lord." I may next refer to the trafficker—including in the term all that buy and sell, from the humblest shopkeeper to the most princely merchant. The just measure and the even balance, the conscientious bargain and the scrupulous fulfilment

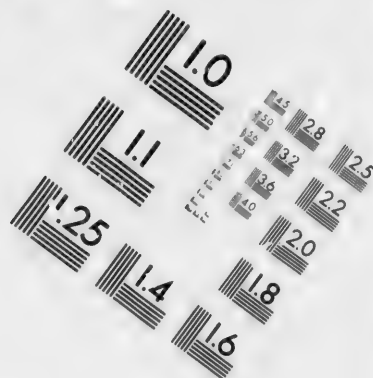
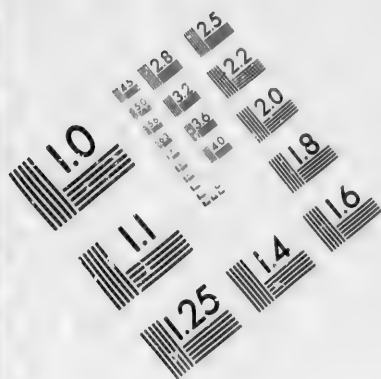
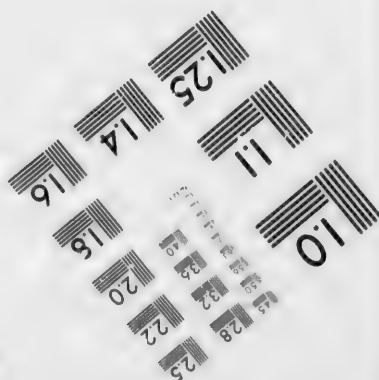
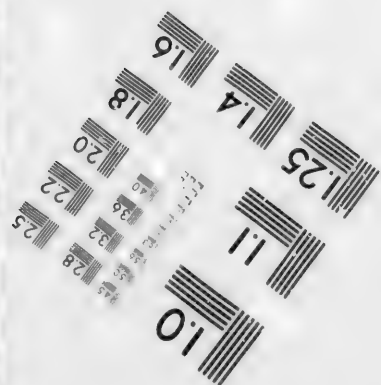
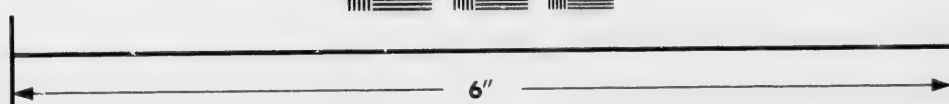
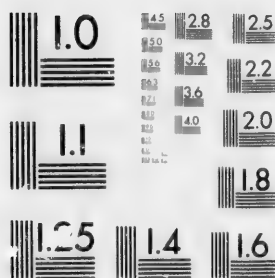


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of the terms of it, the fair price and the reasonable profit, are indispensable to a Christian. They say it's hard in these times of competition for buyers and sellers to maintain conscience. Well, consistency is the only thing to make it easy. What I mean is, let speculation be proportioned only to capital; let the style of living be kept down to the level of these profits that may be reasonably calculated on; let expenditure never go before a fair calculation of the means that are at command, and the tradesman may maintain conscience. There is a royal rule, "Owe no man anything." I wish it could be literally adopted. In the letter, I suppose it can't by all, but the spirit must never be violated; and it will not be so if the account that is necessarily a running one, is so provided for, that on the day when it is due it may be honored. This will render the exact knowledge of your affairs indispensable. With such rules as these, bankruptcies would be rare; and when such as have thus acted shall, through force of circumstances, have to compromise with creditors, respect and sympathy will greet them on every side. Christian character will suffer no damage. The very creditors would examine the vessels of the house, and the pages of the ledger, and report that both were inscribed, "Holiness to the Lord."

3. Consecration must combine with the duties of this world spirituality of mind. If the first element of consecration be genuine, personal dedication to God, the business of this world cannot be the end of your life; if the second illustration be correct, the business

of this world is to be the occupation of your life. Now, the object is to make it the occupation without making it the end. You say that the man of business cannot but be distracted with his many cares, and that spirituality of mind is all but impossible. My friends, business pursued as an occupation, and not an end, would minister to spirituality, for the mind is ever the most healthy when occupied. But it is eagerness for gain that makes it a snare. Be diligent, but moderate in your aims. Read the words of Paul to Timothy; a directory of sound, practical wisdom for business men. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 Tim. vi. 6-10.) Ambition and avarice must be mortified. Worldly station, what is it? The mere accumulation of property, how vain. Even supposing you have ample means whereby you may indulge in pomp and accumulate capital, let your moderation be known in both. Keep down show, live below the measure of ability. Perhaps nothing fascinates more than the rapid accumulation of money; and nothing is fraught with greater danger. I ask no man to quit his station nor to turn hermit; but I do beseech you to remember that your chief dignity is that of adoption into God's family; your truest riches consist in the blessings of His grace, and your best inheritance is heaven. Here again the Bible counsels, as it does in all other matters of life. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and

the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the iust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

4. Consecration to God involves the subordination of all the influence arising out of our position in society and our relation to it for the divine glory. One of the most solemn of considerations is the relation Christian people sustain to the mass of society. There are mothers on whom devolves the training of their children; there are employers who meet the same workmen every day; servants who have an influence with fellow-servants; heads of establishments whose hands are placed under their special superintendence; men of business who travel and mix with indiscriminate society; members of liberal professions who have access to minds on which the stroke of sickness exerts a softening power, and who are found in the most momentous crisis of the immortal man—that of death; and thus it is that through the mass of humanity moral power is operating every day. Now, the grand prerequisite of the hope of usefulness is personal consistency. The lip that is often pale with passion will speak in vain of religion to a child, domestic or apprentice. The man whose hard bargain betrays laxity of conscience will attempt in vain to awaken religious impression in his neighbor. The master that grinds the poor will prejudice the religion he professes by urging it on the victim of oppression. Uprightness, temper, kindness, must be maintained, or zeal will be utterly unavailing.

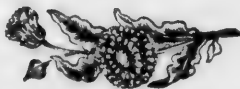
5. Consecration to God involves the cheerful offering of property to the service of God. Why should the ministry be the only department dedicated wholly to the Church? Why should there be no Bezaleels, working in wood and iron and stone expressly for the same object? No Tyrians, whose hire and merchandize should be dedicated things? Would there be anything so very wild in the conception of a tradesman or a merchant just trading for the benefit of the cause of God? A man so prospered as to be able to appropriate an adequate and liberal salary for the support of his family, and then yielding up the whole profit not so appropriated to the cause of God? Examples of such have been found where good men needing no more accumulation, instead of retiring to inactivity, have carried on their worldly business expressly for the service of the Church. It is one of the unfortunate circumstances of our position that a minister can scarcely broach such a subject as this without being accused of personal interest, and it is the one thing that vitiates Christian liberality, that it is so often regarded as a salary given to a particular man, instead of recognizing in it a consecration of substance to God. God's Word teaches that holiness just as much consists in the due setting apart of the week's returns, whether in the small wages of the week or in the abundant proceeds of merchandise, to sacred purposes, as it does in prayer or praise. "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase." God's commands are not set one above the other, all are of equal authority. If the

solitary cent represent a fair proportion of ability, it is as acceptable to God as the pound ; and if the small increase of beginnings is to be dedicated, and the proportion kept up when scores amount to hundreds, and hundreds to thousands, the treasury of God will overflow ; and if this be not done, God's law will be broken and consecration will be imperfect, and the enjoyment of perfect love to God will be an impossibility.

And now, having sketched the elements of consecration to God, let us attend to the practical application of the theme. Is there one of us that does not feel we have come short, and is not such a failure the evidence of imperfect piety? Oh, were our faith in things unseen, our sense of personal forfeiture more deep, our impressions of a Saviour's love more affecting, our obedience more perfect, it would not be thus. Combine the solemnity of death with the tenderness of Calvary, the hope of heaven with the sense of escape from hell, the awe of divine majesty with the meltings of divine love, and then consecration will be the characteristic of our being. Such a consecration must be the effect of the Spirit's more abundant effusion. God has promised to pour out His Spirit. We have need to ask, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" And even believers seem ready to rejoin, "We have not so much as heard that there was a Holy Ghost." A more obvious effusion is to be sought ; a more conscious reception of it is to be desired. With wrestlings it must be sought ; with fervency it must be desired. Pray for it, believe for it.

"O that it now from Heaven might fall,
And all our sins consume ;
Come, Holy Ghost, for Thee we call,
Spirit of burning, come."

The consecration we have described will be a mighty influence for good upon the masses around us. Picture to yourself the results of such a life on the part of all of us in this church. Each one a revival Samson, the gates of Gaza would speedily be borne away. Such a mighty power would go out before us, or from us, that our families would be saved, our neighbors would be saved, the whole community would be aroused. Let each one enter into a closer examination of his own heart. "Am I consecrated to God and His service?"



XIV.

LIGHT AT EVENING TIME.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark : but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night ; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.”—ZECH. xiv. 6, 7.

PROPHECY anterior to its fulfilment is usually obscure, hence interpretations are liable to incorrect assumptions and erroneous conclusions. In the words chosen as a text this morning there may be a meaning not obvious to our perceptions. Some expositors refer the term “day” as used here to all that time which elapsed between the giving of the prophecy and the coming of the Messiah, and agreeably we know that with the Jewish Church the day was neither wholly clear nor altogether dark, neither perfect peace nor constant trouble, neither rain nor sunshine. I prefer, however, to detach the text from this specific meaning—if such be the true interpretation of it—and consider it as descriptive of the method God usually takes in the administration of the kingdoms of providence and grace. Three thoughts present themselves for our consideration this morning.

I. The usual tenor of God’s dispensation is neither clear nor dark, but a sort of twilight. “It shall come to pass in that day,” etc.

II. An intimation of comfort with reference to that dispensation. "It shall be known to the Lord."

III. The joyful issue of that dispensation. "At evening time it shall be light."

I. I am to use the text as illustrative of the mingled state of affairs as seen in this world. "It shall come to pass." Allow me to say just here, by way of parenthesis, that all this darkness is the effect of our low situation or blinded perceptions. Sometimes, you know, when the clouds hang low, and the fogs are thick, and the mists are dense, we can scarcely see the sun, his rays are refracted from us; but if we could get above the clouds and soar aloft, if we could rise above these thick masses of clouds, these marshy evaporations, all would be bright and clear. There is nothing really dark with God, nothing imperfect in the Gospel; and to those who look at them now, through immortal eyes, there is nothing obscure in the providences of God. But to us, to man generally, to man everywhere, there is much in providence and grace that is but twilight, neither clear nor dark, Man may vaunt his wisdom and eulogize his prowess, but he must confess that God's ways are past finding out. His mind no sooner begins to reason than he finds himself in the midst of darkness that his reason fails to penetrate. From the cradle to the grave he walks in twilight. The chamber in which he first opens his eyes is a universe of wonders, and as his circle of knowledge enlarges it is bounded still by mystery. And to grown-up man, there is not a thing

which his hand touches or on which the eye rests that is not enveloped in mystery. The flower that blooms in your garden, the blade of grass that you trample beneath your feet, who has revealed its organization. In this life we are, to a great extent, like emigrants travelling through an unknown wilderness. They stop at night by a flowing stream, set their tents and build a fire, and as the flames rise up all within the circle of a few rods is clear in its light, but beyond and bounding this are rocks dimly seen, and trees with vague outlines stoop forward to the blaze, and beyond the branches creak and the waters murmur on their beds. Verily, life is a day not clear nor dark. But let me illustrate this more particularly.

(a) *Partial distribution of the Gospel.*

Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they have heard the joyful sound. Christianity has, to a large extent, moulded our laws, our domestic life, our maxims, and our institutions. This is a land of light, a land of vision, and it is destined yet to be, in a high sense, a point whence the rays of the luminous Gospel shall diverge to distant lands. But, alas! pass over your own threshold, and what do you meet? Not only some few countries, but there are many lands quite dark. The Birman, the Persian, the Syrian, the Chinese empires, and many others, enclosing the largest amount of the human population, and the fairest portions of the terraqueous globe—nearly all in the dark. When we come to anything like a strict summary of the case, there are only two or three

hundred millions of earth's inhabitants who are acquainted with Christianity at all in any form. When we come to analyze these two or three hundred millions and dissect out of that great mass of human beings, how many of them are Christians by compulsion? How many of them are Christians merely by education? How many are Christians merely in form and fashion? In the eye of that God who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, how few comparatively is the number of real, genuine Christians? Oh, is it not affecting to think that two-thirds of the inhabitants of the earth, after the lapse of eighteen centuries of Christian history and effort, are still without the Gospel of our Lord? The damp, dark, and murky fogs of error and delusion are placing themselves in the way of the bright flood of light. The darkness obstructs the light, the collision is fierce, but the light is destined to prevail; the long dark succession of wintry years shall close, the beauties of holiness shall clothe every region, songs of salvation shall float in every breeze. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." "Their sun shall go no more down, nor their moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended."

(b) *Imperfect attainments of Christians.*

How many of you have been years at the feet of the Prophet of the New Testament Church while He has

been instructing you out of His law. And yet, when you analyze your Christian experience, and explore your moral character, and go down into the depths of your motives and dispositions, you find that in the matter of direct, personal Christian experience it is but twilight, it is not quite light. You have faith, but how few have "full assurance of faith." You have hope; but how few of you have hope ever blooming. You have obedience; but your obedience is but partial, imperfect and irregular. You have joy; but it is meddled with. You are like the children of Israel, who sometimes seemed to make such progress in their journey that they were on the very borders of the promised land; then they were sent back again by the way of the Red Sea. Oh, how few of us reach and dwell in the land of Beulah! You sing of mercy and judgment, and are sometimes doubtful which shall overcome. In the language of the sonnet we often sing, you are constrained to say,

"Yet doubts still intervene,
And all my comfort flies."

Alas! with us "the day is not clear."

(c) *Dispensations of Providence.*

In this matter "the day" at present is "neither clear nor dark." How many are God's providences towards His people that they can neither explain nor understand. How was it with Jacob when Joseph's coat was lifted up before him, torn and bloody? He shook his hoary head, the tear gathered in his eye,

and he exclaimed, "All these things are against me." The dispensation was not clear, there was a mist on the affair, a fog on the occurrence, "the day was neither clear nor dark." So it is with many of the dispensations of Providence now. Some of the links are bright, but others are encrusted and shrouded. You have found it so. You laid your plans, you prophesied a bright future, you saw light gleaming out of every line, and beauty blushing out of every footstep. But all at once an invisible hand overturned your glittering temple, and ploughed up its deep foundations. You saw your children sporting around you in all the exuberance of youth. You anticipated comfort from them in the decline of life, and just then the chill of death crept over them, and they wilted like flowers in the frost. Ah, that day, like many other days of sorrow, was not clear. Yet it was not all dark. The rose nestled and bloomed amid the thorns; out of that which seemed a poison came a very elixir of life. You understood not then all the lessons that God was teaching; but God understood it all. This brings me to notice :

II. The intimation of comfort with respect to these things that the text contains. "It shall be one day known unto the Lord." The idea here is that God has an eye on all these mixed events, a hand in them all. He takes notice of them, orders and disposes all for the best, according to the counsel of His will. The beauty and harmony of divine providence is strikingly noticed by Ezekiel. You remember how he represents

providence as a wheel, a great wheel, in which are many smaller wheels, and all the wheels are full of eyes, and all the eyes are instinct with intelligence; but it is only the small segment of the wheel which we see. We may see some of the smaller wheels which are inserted in the great one, but the revolutions of the great wheel are so high, and are determined by such profound intelligence, that we are obliged to sit down and acknowledge our ignorance of it; but we know the wheel revolves, because the hand of God moves it. Such is the prophet's image of the harmony of divine providence. And our text says, "It shall be one day." A day is made up of hours, each hour crowded with minutes, each minute with seconds. Every day is full of great events to families, individuals and nations; every hour is fraught with occurrences, and every moment embraces important circumstances. But all these seconds included in the minute, and all these minutes crowded into an hour, and all these hours make but one day, every moment of which is known unto the Lord. How many days' reckoning after the manner of men, how many years, have been employed in ripening a single promise. Thus there were some hundreds of years before He fulfilled His promise to Abraham, that his seed should inherit the land of Canaan. Seventy years passed over before the return of the Jews from the land of their captivity. Four thousand years were spent in maturing and evolving matters for the Saviour's birth. But seventy years, and four hundred years, and four thousand years are to the eye of God but one day. "One day

is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Oh, I know we sometimes doubt the harmony and beneficial results of providence. But this is our folly. You may look upon a machine, and see nothing but confusion; but that confusion is harmony to the engineer. What is chaos to you is beauty to the constructor. Just in the same way, what is confusion to you in providence is harmony to God. You talk of chance and luck; the Bible talks of providence. You talk of accident; the Bible talks of design. God has an eye that sees all things, and an arm that reaches from heaven to earth. I like the language and theology of Dr. Watts, who was philosophical as well as devotional. He was too good a divine to say, "God's eternal thought." He says, "God's eternal thought moves all." He sees the end from the beginning, He comprehends past, present and future in one eternal now. Our sight is limited by circumstances; God's eye pierces the universe. "My thoughts are not your thought; neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are My ways higher than your ways." Brethren, we have nothing to dread from the conduct of providence. These events which are happening independently of us are under our Father's control. Don't call them visitations of God. He never merely "visits" us; He abides with us. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." That inner wheel of events which men dread so much is love's executor. Nobly does a poet sing:

“ Let us be patient ; these severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise ;
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise.

“ We see but dimly through the mists and vapors,
Amid these earthly damps ;
What seem to us but sad funereal tapers
May be heaven’s distant lamps.”

III. The joyful issue of this state of affairs.

“ At evening time it shall be light.” Twilight is not an abiding condition, it is a transition state. The transition shall be withdrawn, and at evening time, when after a long, cloudy, tempestuous, stormy day, nothing is expected but a gloomy, howling night—just then it shall be light. You may apply this :

(a) *To the feeble Christian at death.*

Life is frequently compared to a day, of which infancy is the dawn, youth is the morning, manhood is the meridian, and old age is the evening. All men have not a dawn, a morning, a meridian and an evening ; but all have an evening when the sun sets. But to the Christian, “ at evening time it shall be light.” I have spoken of a feeble Christian, and the application of the text to him, because I do not know that those who have most joy in health have most triumph in death. Just as the Saviour was made known to the disciples at the end of the way to Emmaus, so it often happens that those who all through life have been fearful and doubting, get the fullest view of Jesus at the end of the way. How well has John Bunyan

hit this off in the "Pilgrim's Progress," in the character of Fearing, the man who had no fear except one, and that was that he should come short at last. And yet how was it with Fearing? Oh, how he got over the bridgeless river, how joyously he entered into rest, and was embraced by the shining ones on the golden shore! "At evening time it shall be light." Come and see a Christian die. I paint no fancy picture, I give the outline of a scene whose details Gabriel cannot give. It is a low room, poorly furnished, and on a lowly bed lies a dying man. A mortal paleness is on his cheek, but a calm composure is on his heart. Death is in the room, and Christ is in the room; death a servant, Christ the Master. The children of the dying man are around the couch, while the partner of his sorrows looks on with feelings too deep for utterance. He sees a thousand situations in which they will need his help. There is a struggle going on within his heart, till a friend whispers softly, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them, and let thy widows trust in Me." That carries him across the twilight—"at evening time it is light"—and amid one of those pauses common in hours when death is unsheathing his sword, the tongue falters out, "Thanks be to God which giveth me the—" and the next word "victory" is spoken among the angels of the skies. "At evening time it shall be light."

(b) *The Christian in perplexity and trouble.*

Yonder are the hosts of Israel; Pharaoh and his army behind; the Red Sea before them, and Baal-

zephon's cliffs skirting the clouds on either hand, "But at evening time it shall be light." The laws of gravitation are suspended, the waters roll up as a wall on either side, and Israel passes over dry shod. See Hagar in the wilderness, with her son, cast out from Abram's tent. She lays him down, and he must die of thirst; but when the shades of evening were gathering round the mother's heart, "it was light," for a voice said, "Hagar, the child will live;" and she looked, and there was a well of water, and she and her child lived. Look yonder, there is a stir in a patriarch's tent at an early hour, and by-and-by a solemn procession moves out, and they ascend the distant hills, and an altar is built, and an only son is the sacrifice; but while the knife glistens in the sun, and ere it is stained with blood, an invisible arm arrests the patriarch's hand, while a voice cries, "Abraham, Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad." Oh, that is a bold man that would try to describe the agony of Abraham when he lifted up his hand to slay Isaac; but that is a far bolder man, that would try to describe the capture of Abraham when he took down his hand. "At evening time there was light." And if I were to ask you to turn over the leaves of your own history, I would see you putting your finger on some momentous period when "at evening time it *shall be light*."

(c) *The final glory of the Gospel.*

We may take the "day" mentioned in the text to refer to the great day of the Gospel. The first part of this day began with the ministry of the apostles,

and came down to the end of the third century. The second part of this day began with the fourth century, and came down to the Reformation; and the third part of the period embraces the general diffusion of the Gospel, the latter day glory, the resurrection of the dead, and the general judgment. "At evening time," in the latter part of the period signified by this day—"at evening time it shall be light." We live in very remarkable times. There is not an old man in the congregation who can put his finger on any portion of the times through which he has lived, or his father before him, and say they were as remarkable as these times. They are more remarkable than the times of the apostles, for changes in men and nations, as great as those of of Apostolic days, are effected without the aid of miracles. They are more remarkable than the times of the Reformers, for there is not half as much bigotry now as then. In many respects they are more remarkable than the times of Wesley and Whitefield, whose clarion notes thrilled and echoed and reverberated. Then there was no Bible Society, no Missionary Society, no Sunday-school of any moment. Ours is an eventful age. The millennial light is not yet shining, but there are the faint streaks that announce the morning. I thought the other day, as I read the *Methodist Recorder*, I could hear an angel's voice heralding that morning. And what did I read there? Why, I read, that last Easter Sunday, in the old seven-hilled city in Rome—the metropolis of the papacy—whose gates for centuries have been barred against the truth, a Methodist preacher dedicated the first Methodist church in that

old city, preaching from the ominous words, "I am ready, as much as in me lies, to preach the Gospel to you that are in Rome also, for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation." And Gavazzi is there, bearing in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus ; and others are there, rejoicing to declare to the blinded Italians the same old truths that made converts in Cæsar's household. "At evening time it shall be light." Light in which shall bathe the lofty Himalayas and the gorgeous Andes ; light that shall illumine every hill-top, spread through every valley ; light, pouring in floods from the throne of God, over every nation and kindred and tongue. Brethren, are you in the dark or in the light ? "Blessed," I said in the beginning, "are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear the sound of the Gospel." Do you see the glory of God ? Do you hear the voice of the Son of God ? There are two voices of the Son of God we have to hear ; the one is the silver trumpet of the Gospel, the other is the call to judgment. You must hear the last, whether you will or not ; you may hear the first. You may so hear it that it shall be "music in your ears, a sovereign balm for every wound, a cordial for your fears." Don't be satisfied with the form of godliness. Have you the root of the matter.

XV.

THE HOLY WAR.

"Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?"—LUKE xiv. 31.

I PROPOSE, this morning, to discuss this question :
Are the forces of Christianity able and likely to overcome the forces of evil? Are the ten thousand under the leadership of Christ able to cope successfully with the twenty thousand ranged under the banner of Satan?"

Let us look at the forces of the enemy.

It is a very trite thing, but a very true thing, to say that we war against the world, the flesh and the devil. That trinity of powers represents tremendous force. There are a thousand millions to be conquered, and the conquest must be complete. In human warfare, all that is necessary is to break resistance, the will may be left in rebellion. But here every knee must bow, every mind be convinced, every tongue confess and every will submit. The world has fortified itself into systems of errors, built up through ages, ingrained into every custom of national, domestic and individual life, weighty with authority where men worship their ancestors, and mighty in influence where they do not. And then the various languages of many

of these people are saturated with error. The very name of God is lost out of some languages, and in others it is so twisted that Omniscience alone could recognize it. Some people's have lost a fitting conception of sin. The very idea of holiness must be engrafted on the minds of some nations; and the feeling is more difficult to engraft than the idea. And not only are races of men committed to these systems, but there are myriads who have a selfish interest in their perpetuation—myriads whose whole living in laziness depends on it, and who are, therefore, extremely anxious that there shall be no change. The Pharaohs who have been able to extort labor or its results from vast populations, have never been willing to let them go; they slay the surplus rather. They answer every request for amelioration by doubling the tale of bricks. The Pharaohs are a myriad now. God may thunder marvellously at them, and send lightnings along the ground, but they hold on to their slaves. And then, worse than all, the slaves themselves are not anxious to go. The vast mass of them are utterly indifferent. The leeks, onions and garlies of Egypt seem like ambrosia to their perverted tastes. They are utterly stolid to every appeal. No interest can be awakened. Resistance could be overcome and antagonisms met. Brick can be burnt, granite pulverized, and cannon-shot met by cannon-shot, but what can you do with a mud-bank? Shot and shell may sink in it by the ton, and leave no scar. But worse than all this, many, if not all, these slaves love their situation. Egypt is better than Canaan; the

desert than the promised land. Men sacrifice themselves to sin right early. Where Christianity counts one martyr, sin and Satan count a million. Indeed every sinner is a martyr, sacrificing not pleasure, but power; not externals but self; not for a moment, but for eternity. Sin is so dear a thing that men are willing to die for it and in it. From all that devotion the world is to be won; from all that captivity the world is to be captured.

Then, to all these difficulties you must add the active interference of spiritual powers; vast angelic agencies not destroyed, but perverted; might of intellect turned to cunning, and ever scheming against Omniscience; capacities of love turned to hate; capabilities to serve employed in rebellion; strength for God used against Him; original brightness not lost, but turned to blackness. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers."

"Angels our march oppose,
Who still in strength excel;
Our secret-sworn, eternal foes,
Countless, invisible.
From thrones of glory driven,
By flaming vengeance hurled;
They throng the air and darken heaven,
And rule this lower world.

These arms that hold the world are to be broken. Every soul saved must be captured from his captivity. Christ refused to buy the world; He came to conquer it. He girded Himself for a fight, and not for the weighing of shekels. He has led the way in the dire

battle. He trod the winepress of wrath alone. Blood to the horse's bridle is none too strong a figure for the desperateness of the battle. He has enlisted us on His side. Every captive He takes from the black-bannered hosts enlists in the armies of light. How can we meet the foe? He comes against us with twenty thousand, and we have but ten thousand. There they stand—ancient fortresses of error covering every continent—the Babel of tongues; and commanding all these agencies towers up the invisible king of hell, older than the world itself, skilled in thousands of years of successful war, wielding agencies whose vast extent we may well fear but cannot know. What can our ten thousand do? Well, that depends on the quality of the men. "We are utterly outnumbered," cried a faithful scout to his general. "That depends," said the cool commander, "upon how many you count me for." Three hundred men at Thermopylæ, until betrayed, are equal to the surging myriads of Persian hordes. I read in this old book of a kind of men, "where one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight;" and verily I believe men of these divine qualities are the kind of men God meant us to be.

Now, we have seen something of the forces of the twenty thousand who are against us; let us look at the resources of the ten thousand. Christianity to-day holds three-fourths of the land and all the sea. Sixteen languages and numerous dialects have died out since the Christian era, and it is estimated that by the year A.D. 2000 one thousand million of people will

speaking the English tongue. The mental sceptre of the world, once held by Paganism, passed to Mohammedanism, and thence to Christendom, and being founded on demonstrable truth, can never be wrested from its grasp. Wealth and its sources—California, Australia, the Ural mountains—are in the hands of Christian nations. Governments are no longer hostile, but friendly and helpful. And then the Church is better prepared for victory than she ever was. She has met all conceivable assaults victoriously; translated and interpreted the Scriptures; settled all its great doctrines; is no longer engaged in the strife of polemics, but in the emulation of successful devotions to God's cause. The various bodies see eye to eye, provoke to love and good works, instead of hatred and strife. They come to each other to learn the secret of power; and, standing on all these achievements, look forward to wider work and greater success. Nothing succeeds like success—and this always points us to wider triumph. This must come, for I am far from believing that the real standard of Christian power has been reached by any, much less by all. God has higher possibilities of power to open before every individual, and the Church without spot or wrinkle is some distance in advance of the Church general. And then—and I ask your special attention to this—I have expectations of a sudden and marvellous increase of power that is coming to the Church. All history tells me to look for this; all promises of the Bible tell me to look for this.

There are three stages in the history of every

triumph: first, ridicule; second, a settling of principles, an excision of non-essentials, an enforcement of truth on the age; and third, when its strength is tested by persecution and its principles are tested by experience, then comes victory. Then those amazing revulsions of mind take place; opposition is changed to advocacy; persecutors become apostles; Sauls become Pauls; electric power flashes over continents of mind; the former leaders are overpassed and left behind by the advancing flood. Do you say all this has already happened to Christianity? I partially concede it. Ridicule has been awed to silence. Persecutors have enlisted under the banner of the cross, and success is widespread. But greater triumphs are to come, and the divine is to traverse the whole earth, and a new heaven and a new earth are to be full of the righteousness of God. But what right have we to say that from anything we now see? Much, every way. First, because it is God's way of working. All through the ages, development has proceeded by periods. A state of things was introduced and allowed to work out its best results, and then a new era was suddenly introduced far in advance of the last, and then another and another; that is, there were long, gentle risings by development separated by sudden risings by Almighty power. And it is the same to-day; the summer heat passes, the winter cold comes on, but the water continues limpid till, on a sudden, it changes into ice. So, too, we ply the rough ores with heat, and they change through black and red and white heats, and on a sudden the stone flows in limpid

streams. Now, God has wrought in that way in the realm of the religious. The patriarchy was His first uplifting; the theocracy under Moses, His second; then the coming of Christ, His third; and He died, and there was something better than His visible presence, and Pentecost proved it; and the limit is not yet reached, for heaven is beyond. But you say this is "the last dispensation." How do you know it is? We have had dispensations of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, why not one infinitely more glorious—a dispensation of all three combined? That is to be the dispensation of heaven, if I understand it, and what amazing uplifts may precede it on earth I cannot say. But suppose this is the last dispensation on earth. Is any one prepared to say that we have reached its utmost power? Did not God's manifestation increase in grandeur of display of power in the patriarchy? And was there not a growing spiritual significance in the Mosaic? And why may not His consecutive displays of power constantly increase in the dispensation of the Holy Ghost? God's Word teaches me to look for that. God means so much when He speaks that men seldom catch His full meaning at once. Out of His infinite feeling and thought God pours meaning into our poor words till the medium of communication is strained, cracked and staggered with its weight. God is never afraid of strong words. He seeks them, for He knows they cannot convey as much as His infinity can mean. Hence has arisen what men have called the twofold application of prophecy. God unfolds things to come by things that are; things in

the far future by things in the near future. So that (Psa. xvi.) "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption," is applied with wider and deeper meaning to the Messiah. The 49th and 50th of Isaiah prophesy the restoration of the Jews from Babylon; but their return with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads did not fill the whole meaning of the prophecy. It was glorious to them, but God could mean more than the deliverance of a nation could fill. So the Messiah came with radiant glory and infinite love, to make the whole world that He had graven on His palms, break forth into singing and every desire to rejoice, and blossom as the rose, at its return from sin. And though He came eighteen hundred years ago, and those spreading waves of glory have lapped the shore of every sea, all the promises of these chapters are not yet fulfilled. The glory of the Lord has not yet covered the earth as the waters cover the sea. There are promises yet to be fulfilled that will take as distinct an interference and exercise of the divine power as the return from Babylon, the glory of whose results shall as far surpass the return of a nation from slavery as sunshine surpasses dawn. Read Acts ii. 17, 21.

Do you think that has been fulfilled yet? You say it was fulfilled at Pentecost. So it was, in part. But I believe, with Dr. Whedon, that Pentecost was only "a fulfilment, or rather an earnest of future more widespread and powerful effusions which are yet to be characteristic of the last days." This term "last

days" means the closing days of any of the several dispensations, and the last days of the dispensation of the Spirit are yet to come, and a prophecy that covers all succeeding dispensations has a fulfilment yet to be accomplished. Besides, the text says upon "all flesh." I can't believe that Parthians and Medes and Elamites cover the measure of God's purpose in a thing so dear to God's heart. It seems to me that God would like to make a Pentecost in every land that would as far surpass the one in Judea as the second fulfilment of prophecy surpasses the first. Does such an outpouring seem impossible? To me it seems impossible to do without it. God's Spirit presses down. The whole earth—an Ethiopian—stretches out her hands, and the Church stands between. It sees the desperate need of earth and the infinite fulness of God. It must bring the two together. Only let the Church grow more ardent, agonize before God in prayer, and lay her gifts upon His altar, and 'prove Him therewith, and He will open the windows of heaven, and pour them out such a blessing as there shall not be room to contain." In the American war, a man was condemned to death for falling asleep on his sentinel path. He had been up so many nights that he couldn't keep awake. His wife, with a nursing babe she could not leave at home, sat down in one of Mr. Lincoln's ante-rooms to get an opportunity to plead for her husband's life. But there were so many representatives, senators, generals and ministers before her, that she sat all day without getting much nearer the door. The second day the case looked equally hopeless. But toward the close of the

day, the weary child broke out into one long, irrepressible wail. Dignitaries looked unutterable things at the poor mother. But suddenly the door opened, and Mr. Lincoln said, "I hear a child cry; what is the trouble?" "Oh," said the usher, "this poor woman has waited two whole days to see you." "Let her right in, the others can wait." Soon the door opened again, and a radiant woman, with a hushed child, passed out, regardless of generals and senators, bearing a pardon aloft, and crying, "I've got it! I've got it!" So when the Church cries out for father and husband, the pardon must come. Never join the gloomy crowd who say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Peter says, He that has sunk continents under overwhelming seas is not slack concerning His promises, will come and shall not tarry. Suppose iniquity does abound and the love of many wax cold, that is a part of the prophesied preliminaries. "Let the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing, the rulers of the earth take counsel against His anointed." The times of God's special interference have been marked by two characteristics—an intensity of wickedness, and an intensity on the part of God's people. When Jezebel sets up her altars and Elijah is exceeding jealous for the Lord, the fire falls. When malignant slayers of Christ are jubilant and disciples are of one accord, the fire falls again. And if, in these times of evil, men and seducers waxing worse and worse, the Church shall keep herself pure and intense, the fire shall fall again. Oh, the hour of victory is nearer to-day than it ever was. In some respects it

may be night now, but ask the watchman, "What of the night?" and he replies, "The morning cometh." It cometh, and ere long we shall see it bathing Lebanon in its light, gleaming across the waves of the Mediterranean Sea, sparkling from the summit of the snow-clad Alps, playing around the roots of the Himalaya, leaping in beauty on the white-crested billows of the Atlantic, vermilionsing with its hues the majestic peaks of the Rocky Mountains, flashing its glories over the millions of Japan and the nations of the Orient; and then shall a regenerated world rise to tell the stars the wondrous story, while from every mountain and every valley, every island and every shore, redeemed men cry to each other, "Hallelujah!" and the hierarchies of the sky join them in swelling the chorus that shakes the pillars of creation.



XVI.

THE ARK OF GOD'S STRENGTH.

"Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the ark of Thy strength. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let Thy saints shout for joy. For Thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of Thine anointed."—PSALM cxxxii. 8-10.

THE authorship of this Psalm is not known with certainty, but many circumstances seem to point or attribute it to Solomon. It is supposed that it was sung by the Jewish pilgrims in their journeys to Jerusalem, to present themselves before the Lord. "Thrice every year, at the beginning and at the close of the wheat harvest, and again when the grapes were gathered and the wine was made, every son of the law had to appear before God." They went up with singing. Isaiah refers to this when he says, "Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel." (Isa. xxx. 29.) It is supposed also that at the dedication of the temple, ere the glorious prayer recorded in the 6th chapter of 2nd Chronicles was offered up, this Psalm was chanted. The mention of the temple at once reminds us of the great want of the kingdom on which Solomon entered when but a youth nineteen years of age. The ancient wars were over;

the enemies of the nation were subdued; the government in all its offices, and in its hold upon the affections of the people, was mature and strong; but it needed a temple in which the ark of God should be guarded, and the services of religion should be decorously performed. To that great work the king addressed himself. The labors of Tyrian workmen, under the superintendence of their sovereign, were enlisted in it. The mighty forests of cedar, which nodded like crests upon the sides of Lebanon, were cut down and hewn by busy multitudes to form planks and pillars for the sacred structure. Quarries were opened in the limestone regions upon a spur of which Jerusalem is built; and in these excavations, which were discovered a few years ago by accident, the marks of saw and chisel fresh upon them, these immense stones were cut out one by one, that were destined to beautify the city of God and to guard the mountain of His holiness. Foundries were established for the casting of brazen vessels, and with such sagacity was this whole complicated work arranged, that the temple was virtually finished before it was begun; for without the sound of hammer or of axe, in silence and in majesty, like a rapt prophet's vision, the temple of the Lord arose. It was the noblest structure in the world. As it appeared on Mount Moriah, surrounded with gleaming white walls of marble, and rearing in the highest terrace a splendid structure burning with gold, it seemed itself a great altar whose fires rose perpetually to heaven. The scene displayed when this edifice was consecrated stands prominently forth

from the history of the Hebrew people. The nation marched in long and dense procession; the tribe of Levi, with their floating white garments, in the van; while the king, the princes, and the heads of tribes followed the august symbols of their national faith. As they reached the holy mount, the musicians greeted them with triumphal blasts of trumpets and cymbals, and at last came a solemn company bearing the ark of the covenant to the inner shrine, beneath the wings of the gigantic cherubim. Solomon, kneeling down, poured forth a prayer such as the most tender inspiration of his father never surpassed, and as he closed with the impressive words: "Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting place, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength; let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Lord God, turn not away the face of Thine anointed; remember the mercies of David Thy servant," "the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever." (2 Chron. vi. 41-42; vii. 1-3.)

And now, coming to our text, let us gather up its lesson. You perceive how naturally it falls into two

parts—the first having reference to God, the second to man; the one, a prayer that God would arise to bless His people, and give them a token of His presence; the other, that His priests may be invested with righteousness, and that all his saints may be joyous in their God.

First, the reference to God, "Arise, O Lord." What deep earnestness and importunity are couched in that word "Arise." "Arise," for the king knew that without God's presence and blessing the house would be empty of all that could make it really excellent, the assembly vain, and the bleeding sacrifice lie unconsumed upon the altar. To what purpose is the glory of the building? What worth belongs to marble walls and covered porticos; the pillars, wreathed with golden pomegranates; the deep green cedar, tall palm and hoary olive; altars and molten seas, supported by brazen oxen; carvings of palms and flowers and cherubim; veils of blue and purple and crimson, and garnishings of all manner of precious stones? "Arise," was therefore the earnest call of the assembly, that a more excellent glory might give heavenly grandeur to the whole. And "Arise!" the singers cried, that an impetus yet further might be given to praise, to magnify the Lord. God's presence would enable the people yet again to say, "He is the rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." "Arise!" was the call; just as Moses, the man of God, began his prayer when the ark set forward, "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate

Thee flee before Thee;" and when it rested he said, "Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel." Or, as when David sung on bringing the ark from the house of Obed-edom, "Let God arise; let His enemies be scattered; let them also that hate Him flee before Him." The king was importunate; the musicians, the people were importunate. God's servants are ever so in prayer, pressing upon Him His promises. His presence is our life.

If you would see the state of the people who have not sought the Lord, look abroad on scattered Israel—trodden under foot, a by-word and a hissing. If you would learn the history of a people, among whom God dwells, reverse the sad picture, and look at Israel in the palmy days of prosperity, when Jehovah's smile spread peace and plenty through the land, and Israel was a tree planted by the rivers of water, bearing the unwithering leaf, and prospering in all she did. But observe, Solomon prays that God may give them a token of His favour: "Arise, O Lord, Thou and the ark of Thy strength." You are doubtless familiar with the history of the ark of God—how it was formed by His command after a heavenly pattern; how within it were the rod of Aaron that miraculously budded; a golden pot, containing a specimen of the manna of the desert, and the tables of the covenant; on its top the mercy-seat, with the cherubim at either end, beneath whose extended wings was the darkness in which God said that He would dwell. You know how it was carried before the Israelites in their wanderings; how it rested in the tabernacle when they were settled in the land

of promise; how it fell, for Israel's disobedience, into the hands of the Philistines. You have read of the sin of the people of Beth-Shemesh, who looked into the ark; of its being carried to the house of Ahinadab; of its removal thence by David, who, in alarm, because of Uzziah's death placed it in the house of Obed-edom; thence to the tabernacle pitched for it by David, where it remained till the completion of the temple by Solomon. That ark was the symbol and pledge of the divine presence, and it was an eminent type of Christ. It was formed of the most durable material, shadowing the nature of Jesus, which death could not hold, nor decay effect; it was overlaid within and without with gold, emblematic of His divine nature, which adorned, in the eyes of His people, with heavenly glory His every word and action. It contained the tables of the law; Christ had the law in His heart, magnified and made it honorable. It had the pot of manna; Christ has food and nourishment for hungry souls. It had Aaron's rod that budded; figurative of the life which is infused by Christ to poor, dead souls, who are as insensible by nature as the rod severed from the parent stem. Casting Jewish thought then into the Christian moulds, this prayer is to us as if we said: "Arise, O God, Thou and Thy dear Son, be present with us; let us behold Thee with an eye of faith; speak to us as Thou didst to Israel. Open to us a way through the dangers and difficulties of life and the horrors of death by Jesus, as Thou didst for Israel in the wilderness, and through Jordan, by the ark. Let Christ be here, that the Dagon of self may fall and be broken before

Him ; let Christ be here as in Obed-edom's house, that they who love Him may be blessed. Make us to remember that, as a plague was on the Philistines for lightly esteeming the ark, so will a plague be on any of us who lightly esteem Jesus ; humble us, lest we presume to pry into the secrets of the Lord ; warn us by the hand of Thy wrath, that came on the men of Beth-Shemesh, who dared to look into the ark. Feed us with heavenly manna, teach us with heavenly doctrine, send us to follow Christ, our Ark ; give us grace to say, " Whither Thou goest I will go, and where Thou lodgest I will lodge ; Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." But to be more particular, in the dwelling of God in the ark, or in the token of his favour vouchsafed in this way, there was a threefold similarity to our coming to the temple to worship God. There was meeting with God, communion with God, and instruction from God. These were the purpose of the solemnities observed before the ark, and they are also the great objects to be always associated with the public assemblies of the Christian Church. In them we meet with God, He has engaged His gracious presence, " Where two or three are met together, there am I in their midst." He comes in answer to the prayers of His people, blessing His word, manifesting His power to save, and filling their hearts with the conviction, " God is in this place." Oh, with what devoutness of spirit would our congregations be marked, if each one coming up, felt, " I am going to meet God."

But there is not a mere interview, there is commu-

nion with God. Communion is the outgoing of man's spiritual nature, the activity of his thoughts and affections. He communes with God in the expression of gratitude, or trust or penitence; in contemplating the character of God, the wonders of His providence, the blessings of His grace. There is just so much of worship in our meetings, and no more, as there is of actual individual converse with God. And then there is instruction. Real religion is founded on knowledge, its sustenance is the truth as it is in Jesus. The Church is Christ's school, where we learn of His doctrine and sacred will. The increase of our knowledge consists not only in the addition to the store of truths received into the mind, but in the increase of their spiritual authority over us. When Sir M. Hale was asked why he, a learned man, went to hear a very simple but godly minister, he said, "I go for impression, not for information." It were well if the same feeling largely animated the Church, and that she should continually say, "Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God; Thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness."

Again, the ark was the symbol of the divine presence with His people. We have not now the glory cloud poised in the heavens above us, but, thank God, the ark is still in the midst of His people. Whenever the world is convinced of sin; when the saints are fervent in prayer and diligent in seeking the good of souls; when the giddy are arrested in their whirl of gaiety; when the callous are melted, the obstinate persuaded, the doubting assured, and the despairing

blessed ; when believers are quickened into new life ; when the soul is humbled under a sense of unworthiness and overwhelmed with visions of the love of God ; when the false confidences of the heart are shivered, and we are enabled to rely on Jesus only ; when love glows with intenser heat, and under its fervid influence we are led to consecrate ourselves afresh to God ; then we have unmistakable evidence of the presence of God, that the Ark—Christ Jesus—is fulfilling His promise, “ Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Further, the ark was the defence of God’s people. What were rolling seas and rushing rivers ; what were hosts of warlike enemies ; what the shield, the bow, the chariots of war, to Israel, while the ark abode with them and they were loyal to Jehovah ? On every occasion they could sing, “ The Lord is our strength and song, and He is become our salvation. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power. Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.” And God is still the shield and covering of His people. He has warded off many a blow, and put to flight our foes. Speak we of His Church, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ; or speak we of individual Christians, God is a wall of fire round about them.

“ Angels your march oppose,
Who still in strength excel,
Your secret, sworn, eternal foes,
Countless, invisible.

Finally, the ark was a medium of revelation. Throughout all the journeyings of the Israelites in the

wilderness it was a channel of communication between God and His people, either in the announcement of His will or in the emphatic expressions of His disapproval. And does not God still teach His people by His Word and Spirit? True, the Spirit makes no new revelation. It is His function to make clear the revelation that already exists. It is His office to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." Brethren, it is our privilege to be baptized in spiritual light and influence. Give us this, and we shall hear less of speculation and more of faith; less of theorizing, and more of practice; less of doubts and scepticism, and more of confidence and activity. The refuges and strongholds of bigotry will be invaded and exposed, the proud vauntings of ecclesiastical self-glorying will cease, and all the churches of the land will more practically recognize the fact that their great mission is one, and the power by which all are to accomplish that mission the same. "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord."

And now, in the second place, consider this prayer in its reference to man. "Let Thy people be clothed with righteousness, and Thy priests shout aloud for joy." The priests alluded to by Solomon were the Levitical priests. They were clothed in ephods, and offered up sacrifices continually for sin. They were also the accredited teachers of the people. A long description of their robes is given in the law. The

ephod of the high priest was richly embroidered with various colors, interlaced with gold and spangled with precious stones, on which were engraved the names of the tribes of Israel. The ephod worn by the common priests was of fine linen, but without the riches or the adorning of that of the high priest. In the New Testament the whole relation of man to priesthood is changed. Jesus Christ is a priest forever. He was a sacrificing priest. His altar was Calvary, His own blood the atonement; and having offered up Himself for sin, He passed into the heavens to pray for us as the Priestly Mediator of the New Testament covenant. Some see an analogy between the Jewish priest and the Christian pastor; but it seems to me, that if there is any office under the old covenant that answers to that of a pastor amongst us, it is the Levite that waited upon the priest. There is not a word in the New Testament that warrants us in calling any one priest, save Jesus Christ, and His own people, who, in a spiritual sense, are a royal priesthood. The fact is, there is no religion in the world—certainly none that prevails amongst any of the celebrated nations—that has not priests, except Christianity. Priests sacrifice for the people; we refer them to the sacrifice of another. They propose to be mediators, through whom the Deity must be addressed; we teach them to look only at a heavenly Mediator, and in His name to approach God's mercy-seat for themselves. They study to conceal the mysteries of religion; we labor to make them known. They strive to keep the people in darkness and to stifle inquiry; we make it our

business to enlighten them, urging them to search the Scriptures. And yet I am afraid that some lapse in what is the very origin of priestcraft, namely, doing religious duty by proxy. But surely the minister cannot pray in your stead, cannot perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord in your stead, cannot let your light shine before men, cannot take your place before God. Nay, in this work you are all priests, to offer up acceptable sacrifices to the Lord. So that this prayer, "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and Thy saints shout aloud for joy," refers to all believers.

Now, I may take this term righteousness in two aspects. I may interpret it by the word rightness. Let thy people be clothed, girt about with right; let them be right in doctrine, right in life, right in profession and in practice, in devotion and in business. Let them be clothed with the garment of honesty in trade, with correctness in society, with charity in judgment, with sincerity in opinion, with humility in profession. It is well to contend earnestly for the faith. But faith without works is dead. Oh, it were a grand thing if we could say of every one in the Church, he is absolutely right. Then I may give the word a more evangelical sense. Clothed with righteousness, with purity. The righteousness of saints is compared to fine linen, pure and white. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light," we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin." God's people are a holy people. They

are in the next sentence called saints—holy ones. “Let Thy saints shout aloud for joy.” And surely Israel had cause for joy as they stood around their king. The temple was dedicated at a time when all the land was clothed in beauty. The olive and the palm the fig tree and the cedar, the myrtle and the box, the pomegranated and the date, all had put on their royal robes. The corn-fields told of the munificence of God, and the vineyards spake of his exceeding beauty. The gentle stream murmured a song of praise, and the deeprolling river was voiced with thankfulness. And as they stood there at peace with all, and with the gorgeous temple before them, and thought of their deliverance from the brick kilns of Egypt, and the dangers of the wilderness, and the sword’s bow of the Canaanite, and right heartily would they say, “Amen,” to the words of Solomon. “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath with His hands fulfilled that which He spake with His mouth to my father David.” But, brethren, God’s character is unfolded to us in His son far more than in the glory of the field and flood. Shall we not, then, rejoice? They had shadows and rejoiced therein we have substance; Christ has come! He has died for us, He has risen again, He is at the right hand of God. Shall we not, then, rejoice? Eve had joy in the promise of Christ given to her; Abraham rejoiced to see His day by faith, and was glad; the Psalmist rejoiced to sing the praises of Him who was to come; the prophets, seeing His glory brightening the horizon, rejoiced to speak of Him. At His first advent heaven ran over with joy, and shepherds of

Bethlehem caught the hallelujahs of the angelic messengers; Mary said, "My spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour;" Anna, the prophetess, was glad; Simeon said, "Now, Lord, lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation;" John the Baptist rejoiced; the people rejoiced when He entered Jerusalem; the disciples when He rose from the dead; the Eunuch, when Philip preached to him. And with this godly company would we hold fellowship of joy to-day.

" 'Worthy the Lamb that died,' they cry,
 ' To be exalted thus !'
 ' Worthy the Lamb,' our hearts reply,
 ' For He was slain for us !' "

Christianity is the only religion of gladness. Rome prescribes dreary penances. Did you ever see a really happy-looking papist? Mohammedanism is sombre as the grave. Heathenism wails out a miserere. Infidelity in all its forms is but the outbreathing of despair. The Christian religion alone can sing in the midst of trouble. Rejoice evermore. Again I say rejoice. This joy is a condition of soul arising out of the harmonization of all its powers with the will of God. It is different from happiness. Happiness is born of pleasant surroundings. It is the child of wealth or good health, or troops of friends, or of some other form of prosperity. But joy sings in the dark as well as in the light; in the prison as well as on the throne; in the lone island of the sea as well as in the palace; in the hour of death as well as when the eye flashes with the fire of life. Deep calls to deep, waves and

billows go over the Psalmist's soul, yet his soul makes her boast in the Lord. Famine stalks lean and gaunt through the land, the vine purples not into grape, no flocks gambol in the fields, the stall is empty of the herd, yet godly Habakkuk cries, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." Apostles are scourged, but every cutting lash only extracts praise for the grace that gives strength to bear it. Martyrs are burned, yet the flames only become chariots in which their exultant spirits rise to the waiting heavens. Common Christians rise into uncommon saints, as the furnace consumes the dross and refines their graces. The Church, all through the ages, has marched to the music of the skies, and in no feeble measure has triumphed through her songs. Let thy saints shout aloud for joy.



XVII.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

"My kingdom is not of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from hence."—JOHN xviii. 36.

I SEE an ordinary Jewish peasant, a little over thirty years of age. He has nothing about Him to distinguish Him from hundreds of other men except, perhaps, His extreme poverty. He is without a home, without patrimony, without a pillow on which to lay His head. And yet this weary, homeless young man calls himself a king, and speaks of a kingdom peculiarly His own ; different from all earthly kingdoms ; better and more enduring, because heavenly and divine. Have you never noticed with what naturalness and, as men would say, with what sublime audacity Christ asserted for Himself the most extraordinary claims ? There was no attribute or office of supremacy which He did not appropriate ; no necessity of the race, no aspiration of the world's great heart, which He did not propose to satisfy from Himself. Hear Him, "I am the Light of the world," "I will draw all men unto Me." "In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood in the midst, and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and

drink." Greece had an illustrious triumvirate of sages, but fancy Aristotle saying, "I am the light of the world." Imagine Socrates crying to the heavy-hearted, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" or conceive of Plato saying, "I am the resurrection and the life." The very idea is unthinkable, and yet these amazing declarations fall as naturally from the lips of Christ as dew falls from the grateful flowers. Up to the time of the Man of Nazareth, Moses was the chiefest of the Hebrews; but Christ put the crown upon him when He said, "He wrote of Me." David was the royalist of kings; but he was Christ's subject, and called Him Lord. Jonah was a prophet of renown, and Solomon was a synonym for all regal splendor; but Christ said a greater than Jonah or Solomon is here. "My kingdom is not of this world." Very emphatic is that expression "Not of this world." It was not the product of the historic forces of the world such as gave rise to the kingdoms of men. It would not require the Christ of God to construct such. That was not what the world wanted. That had been tried already. Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Cæsar and Alexander had established universal empires, and we know the result. It never raised man above the corruption and degradation into which he had fallen. And could you to-day reach a higher standard? Could you give men all that Socialism demands or contends for—education, freedom, abundance of labor, a fair remuneration, a comfortable cottage, and a few works of art—you would doubtless do a great deal for

man ; but, after all, you would only be dealing with the circumstances of the man, not with the man himself. You would give the patient a softer bed, but you would not cure his disease. "My kingdom is not of this world." With the word kingdom, in an earthly sense, we associate something material, the idea of the territory reigned over, rather than the reign itself ; power as expressed by fleets and armies ; luxury and state, as displayed in palaces and august ceremonies ; a succession to the throne, elective or hereditary. But Christ's kingdom is limited by no geographical boundaries ; it is cumbered by no pomp of thrones, diadems or sceptres. It is a kingdom in which the subjects do not elect their king ; it knows nothing of the inequalities of hereditary rank ; in it no man can be a sovereign, and no man can be a serf ; the king must enter by the same door that admits the peasant, and the admitted peasant is equal to the king, for he is a fellow-citizen of the saints, and a partaker of all the privileges of the sons of God. It is a spiritual kingdom. True, it sustains relations to material things ; it worships in houses built by human hands ; it employs the ministry of men ; it expresses itself in written creeds ; its Bible is printed as other books ; its sacraments make use of material elements. But the kingdom of God does not *consist* in these outward things. "It is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The "righteousness which is through the faith of Christ," imparted by the Holy Ghost ; "and peace," the deep, holy calm which follows faith, unruffled tranquillity,

undisturbed serenity amidst all outward agitations; "and joy in the Holy Ghost," when the Spirit dwells within the heart, bearing witness of adoption, and revealing Christ as the hope of glory. The victories of this kingdom are all spiritual. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin and Satan." The voice of the cannon is never heard within its bulwarks; the sword of steel is never unsheathed in any of its battles; the bloody flag is never unfurled within its dominions. No wounds are felt but the wounds which the Spirit's sword makes. No cries of agony are heard but the captives struggling for deliverance from the powers of darkness. Its worship is spiritual. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Its political relationships are spiritual. It has no necessary connection with any state, or it may be associated with any form of government. It may exist under the most cruel despotism or the most rabid republic. The most benign patronage of the state cannot aid it; the most furious persecution cannot retard it. It lives and moves and has its being in Him by whom kings reign and princes decree judgment. Fire and sword cannot waste it; combined ingenuity and malignity cannot destroy it. Its "life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." But not only is it a spiritual kingdom; it is a kingdom of power. Look at its early history. Let me read to you what I regard as one of the most wonderful pas-

sages in the New Testament. But before I read it, look about you, and consider the character of the religions and nations of the world. In Palestine, a dead church, split up into rival sects, hating each other, but all combining in their hatred of the new religion; in Greece, godless philosophy; in Rome, voluptuous and unnameable vice of every degree; beyond, a great black bank of heathenism, a world lying in the arms of the wicked one. Here, on a Galilean mountain, eleven simple men headed by a native of Nazareth, professing a faith every article of which was calculated to set on fire the bigotry of the Jew, to excite the ridicule of the Greek, to arouse the hatred of the Roman, to provoke the atrocity of the barbarian. But, looking out into the darkness of the nations, "the eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them," etc. (Matt. xxviii. 16, 20.) That was the inauguration of the grandest institution our world has ever known, and those eleven men accomplished the mightiest revolution the world has ever witnessed. It pervaded Judea, it irradiated Asia Minor, it crossed over to the shores of Europe, that first having risen like the sun in the east, it might ascend to its zenith and illumine all the kingdoms of the west. It seized upon the great cities of two continents; it captured Antioch, converted its name to Theopolis, the city of God, made it the home of Ignatius and Chrysostom, and the place where the name of Christian first originated. It entered Ephesus, and gathered a church from the midst of its blooming gardens; it flew to

Thessalonica, the Liverpool of the Levant ; it called at Athens, long enough to deliver the Athenians a nobler oration than Demosthenes ever uttered ; it came at last to Rome, and left converts in Nero's household.

But come now and look at the influence of this kingdom upon the man. It regenerates men. If so, then its divinity is demonstrated and a new hope, like a morning star, dawns on the vision of humanity. Old Celsus, one of the earliest infidels, objected to Christianity because it undertook impossible things, such, said he, "as making men over again." Why, verily, that is just what it does. It did that when it transformed Saul the persecutor into Saul the missionary and martyr. Contrast Ignatius, Polycarp, Clement and Augustine with the educated gentlemen of the Pagan civilizations ; or contrast Fenelon with Mirabeau, Pascal with Voltaire, Henry Martyn with Thomas Paine. Or, if you choose, compare the different periods in the life of the same man—the Bunyan, for instance, who was rebuked for his profanity by a wicked woman, with the Bunyan who, in the person of his Pilgrim, stood on the heights of the delectable mountains, thrilled with the vision of the glory-clad pinnacles of the city of God. We sing a hymn commencing

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me."

and another,

"One there is above all other—
Oh, how He loves—
Well deserves the name of brother—
Oh, how He loves."

And as the earth rolls on its axis and the Sabbath morning sun rises on the English-speaking lands which encircle the earth, these hymns salute its light from continent to continent, and from shore to shore, until what were the morning songs of John Newton became the evening songs of the Christian world—the same John Newton, who trod the deck of a slave ship and shocked his companions in vice by his profligacy.

What cannot Christianity do? Whom cannot it save? Try it in Japan, and our missionary report tells of an old idolater gloriously converted at the age of ninety-five; and the same book gives the experience of a convert on her death-bed. Said she, "I have suffered great sickness three times in my life; in two cases I was afraid to die, and could not sleep day or night; but now, in this sick-bed, no fear of death troubles my heart. My heart is always in peace. I can't express the depth of blessing by any word I know." Try it upon the poor Indian; and away out at Naas River, in British Columbia, the missionary says, "A woman, very happy when dying, said, 'Jesus, take my hand.'" What a beautiful death! "Jesus, take my hand"—and the Blessed One took it and raised her to a throne. At Bella Coola the missionary baptized an Indian lad, calling him Harry Davis. "The next day," says the missionary, "Harry told me that on the day before his heart seemed as if divided into two rooms, one above the other. The sermon entirely filled the lower room. Then when the hand was placed on the head to baptize him the partition

gave way, and the undivided heart was filled to overflowing." Oh, may God break down in like manner all the partitions in our hearts, that our whole being may be filled with all the fulness of God. And thus it is that from the dim past and from the illumined present, from the hut of the Indian and from the home of the American, from the abode of the Japanese and from the mansion of the European, multiplied proofs come that this Gospel which your missionaries are preaching "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile."

And yet I am told that Christianity is failing. Who tells me so? Infidelity tells me so. And what is infidelity? A murderous hand reaching up through the smoke of the pit, to smite and blast, to curse and destroy. What has it accomplished for the world? Where are its temples, where its schools and colleges, its hospitals and societies of benevolence? What science or art has it originated? When did it ever create a single virtue? What life has it ever assisted to higher holiness? What death has it ever cheered? None, none! It bewilders, it confuses, it perplexes and tortures and damns. Christianity failing? Yes—with the Bible translated into more than three hundred languages and dialects, with missionary stations planted on every shore, with dark continents opened for the heralds of salvation, with long isolated nations unbarring their gates and flinging open their moss-grown portals, with the isles of the sea stretching out their hands to God, with servants and handmaidens on whom the Spirit of God

has been poured out, flying as on the wings of the wind, to bear the message of salvation to a lost world, with all the appliances of modern science and the activities of modern enterprise and intellect. Christianity is failing, is it? No, no! Voltaire said he lived in the twilight of Christianity. He told the truth, though he meant a lie. He meant the twilight of the evening; it was the twilight before the morning. Oh, I see her just raising herself! There is beauty on her brow, there is lustre in her eye, there is glory on her cheek. I see her stepping on the mountains, passing over the plains. I see her fair white hand, with nail-scars and blood-drops on it, stretching down through the clouds of wrath, distributing blessings on the sons of men, lifting helpless sinners from bondage and misery into liberty and joy, and placing them high above seats of angels and archangels. And this kingdom shall endure for ever. The bitter ingredient in the cup of kings is that their kingdoms must be left to other people. Where are the mightiest kingdoms of the past? You walk over the scenes of their greatness, and a voice speaks to you:—

“Stop, for thy tread is on an empire’s dust;
A nation’s spoil lies sepulchred below.”

But the kingdom of Christ is an everlasting kingdom. Death cannot destroy it, but only brings it into the immediate presence of the King of righteousness. Its one principle is love, and love is eternal. “They sin who tell us love can die.”

“O'er every foe victorious,
Christ on His throne shall rest ;
From age to age more glorious,
All-blessing and all-blest.

“The tide of time shall never
His covenant remove ;
His name shall stand forever,
His great, be it name of Love.”

And this kingdom is for you. Christ hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. This kingdom may be established in your hearts. Its righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost may be realized by you. Its principle of love may govern you. It requires no condition but you can practise, no duty but you can perform, no law but you can obey. But oh, the thought that we may reject this kingdom. The throne which we should have occupied may be vacant, the crown which we might have won may be useless, the harp which we might have struck may be silent ; and instead of the everlasting kingdom of light, the everlasting kingdom of darkness ; instead of the eternal song, eternal wailing and gnashing of teeth ; instead of being with Christ and with the spirits of the just made perfect, with the devil and his angels. All that the King requires is that you should choose Him as the Captain of your salvation ; to grasp His almighty strength, to trust His all-cleansing blood, and you shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved you. Workers, work on ; the Master shall call you to your rest. Soldiers, fight on ; and you shall in triumph shout, “I have fought the good fight, I have kept the

faith, I have finished my course." This kingdom shall stand forever—everlasting joy, everlasting life, everlasting songs, everlasting glory, everlasting thrones, everlasting progress in knowledge, in purity and in happiness; and when incalculable ages shall have passed away, it shall only then be the morning of the everlasting day.



XVIII.

GOD OUR SHIELD.

"I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."—GEN. xv. 1.

A SHIELD and a reward; these two things compass man's needs, which are, first, protection, and second, the fulfilment of his labors and desires. Let us look for a little at what is against us from which we need protection.

1. Natural forces are against us.

In some respects nature helps us. The universe is not a mere creation, a mystery, a beauty; but a thing full of helping things for us to use. Spring days, summer hours, passing showers, autumn fruits, storms and winds, and stars and skies; the melting, the awe-inspiring, the familiar, the rare, the grand, the minute—we must recognize all these as helps to lift us into better things. Thus Jesus did. He recognized and used everything. Not the least escaped Him. Nay, the way He used the least things, the great things He drew from them, left the impressive truth for man that there are no little things. The lily, the bird, the evening cloud, the seed of mustard, the leaven, the fish, the scorpion, the mote—all became, in His hand, mighty ministrants to mighty truths and mighty issues. We, too, must learn to search for the helping hands that

stretch themselves out to us from every corner of the world. The poet tells us of the footprints on the shore that the forlorn and shipwrecked brother sees, and takes heart again. He uses the footprint as his help. The little weed on the tossed Atlantic came to the distressed Columbus, and he used its help and found America; and the astronomer used the aberration of the heavenly body, and it put him on the track of bountiful prophecy and quick discovery. But while in these senses nature helps us, in other respects she is cruel and unsparing. She has a power that is over us rather than under us. We turn some of her forces to our use—shut up a little of her steam, gather a little of her electricity, and yoke them to our service; we make her water drive our wheels and her wind propel our ships; yet how far off we are from her subjugation, and how feeble are we before her. Her lightning, her earthquakes, her cyclones—how feeble are we before these. Do what we will, water will drown, and gravitation will dash in pieces, and heat will slay, and gases will poison. No degree of obedience to natural laws will prevent oxygen from consuming tissue, or strengthen the walls of the jugular vein, or take away the power from the wasting years. We stand ever in the presence of destroying, relentless forces, which we may outsail or outmaster up to a given point; but beyond that we are swept along their fixed and fatal current. What, then, can give me protection from all this? God can, and God does; by assuring us that we belong to Him rather than to nature. When that assurance comes, I put myself

into His larger order; I join the stronger power, and link myself to its fortunes. The great question for us to ask and answer is, do we belong to the material or to the spiritual? If the material world is all that includes me, then I am no more than one of its grains of dust, and must at last meet the fate of a grain of dust. But if spirit has an existence of its own, if there is a spiritual order with God at its head, then I belong to that order; there is my destiny, and there my daily life. And if I accept God's law as the rule of life, and if I am harmonized with it through faith in Christ, then nature may threaten to destroy me, but I say to her, "You may slay my body with your laws, and you will at last; but you will not slay me, nor can you greatly hurt me. I do not belong to you, I belong to God."

2. There are in this present life inevitable evils, and God is our shield against them. There comes a time in the life of every human being who does not die in early or middle life, when the law of weakness and decay is felt in its operations. Youth is sprightly; from youth on up to a certain point there is a sense of strength and adequacy. We ride on the crest of the waves of life. But by-and-by we change in feeling and in fact. The step grows slower, the eyes lose their keenness, the voice loses its soft vibrations, recovery from illness is slower. The tables are turned against us. Heretofore life, the world, the body have been for us; now they are against us. Poetry may fling around this fact sentiment and song, but

"Whatever poet, orator or sage
May say of it, old age is still old age."

And unless you can meet this fact with some larger fact, philosophy and will power and habit and high flow of spirit will not kill the element of sadness that is in it. Apart from God there is nothing left for us but brute-like endurance or some phantom show of cheer and will; nothing but sentiments that are bound up in the dissolving process, and that necessarily come to an end when most needed. But God comes to me in this crisis, when powers are failing, and death is putting his seal upon the eyes, and He calls Himself the "I Am," in other words, He calls Himself existence. The very name is an argument. Existence says to decaying, dying man, "I am your shield." "I made you," He says, "but you shall not perish because I put you into a perishing body. Because I made you, you cannot perish. Because I am the everliving God, you shall live also." Aye, but that life that lives on may be terrible. But listen, as Christ says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He has purchased for those who love Him an eternal life, the germ of which is begotten in the believer by the Holy Ghost. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Here is our protection against evil. Because He lives, we shall live also—live in Him, live with Him for evermore. This hope is "an anchor to our faith, both sure and steadfast."

3. There are calamities in life against which God is a shield. I confess to you that when I take the ordinary average life, I hardly know how men stand up under it. Take a life where one pair of hands is all there

is between the family and starvation, with the chances of sickness and no work. Or take the every-day catastrophes—loss of property, children, wife or husband ; take the life-long sorrows—the drunken son, the daughter gone to shame, the marriage that has turned into disgust ; it is not easy to walk steady through the years with such burdens on one. Think of the secret sorrows, of the disappointments, of the failure of plans, that come in life. All these make up a heavy burden. Sir Walter Scott said, “It is enough to have lived.” But very few can say that. Now, the fact is, let a man fight never so bravely, let him conjure up courage and will power—and there is a mighty overcoming force in these—but he cannot defend himself as he ought and as he wishes against calamities without God. And I thank God that He does become the strength of His people amid such influences. Shakespeare caught this truth when he makes Hamlet say, in view of what he has to do and bear, “I’ll go pray.” Put God beside human sorrow and human burdens and human care, and the whole sphere and scene of life is changed, lighted into a realm of power and wisdom and gladness. Some one has said that the most of the Psalms were written in a wilderness ; that most of the epistles were indited in a prison. The very calamities of life have been made a blessing to many of you. You were walking towards a precipice over which you were likely to fall, when God wrestled with you by some discipline of trial, and in the conflict your eyes were opened to your danger, and you fell back into the arms of the pitying God. “No sorrow seemeth at the present to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, after-

ward it worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby."

4. God is our shield against ourselves. It is often said man is his own worst enemy. That is usually applied to men who have loose habits and depraved appetites, but it may be true of men who have none of these. The tendency of unrenewed men is towards self-hood and away from God-hood. A very fair-looking and seemly life may be caged in four little walls that self has built about the soul. And this is positive misery, to be shut up with self, to walk up and down self, and find how small it is to measure, and weigh it and find how light it is; to feed on self, to dwell and live and converse with self—there is hardly anything worse than this. If you would see this truth put in high and strong expression, read Tennyson's "Palace of Art." He built the palace gorgeous as an Arabian fairy tale, but he left it empty.

"No voice breaks through the stillness of this world;
One deep, deep silence all."

But now God comes in through Jesus Christ, shield-like, saving us and drawing us away from ourselves. And with His coming, self is slain and a noble end is set before us, even the divine glory; living for self is destroyed, and the soul's powers and activities go out in sympathy and love for the perishing around; thinking of self is given over, and in the sublime purposes that take hold upon the pure and the holy, a thousand little annoyances are lost sight of entirely. God coming to the soul wakens all its powers, transfigures all its thoughts, lifts the man into a positive

greatness of being. Oh it is a grand thing to be saved from ourselves. To get out of our own tracks, to be delivered from our petty littleness, to be pushed out beyond the small circle of our own thoughts. There is an inspiration in this coming of God that makes us strong and noble and Christ-like. But there is the other member of this text that we must consider. "I am thy exceeding great reward." "I am thy reward." Whether we call it selfish or not, man looks for a reward even in his religious life. Abraham lived and feared and obeyed God, and he looked for a reward. He kept looking for the promised country, but at last died without its sight. Still all along God was rewarding him. He made life to him tolerable, if not triumphant, calm, if not joyful; while the great, main desire of his life is carried over into the world to come. He found a country, but it was beyond the Jordan of death. It was not a land flowing with the milk and honey of earth, bearing grapes and corn, but it was a heavenly country. So every true and righteous life will be rewarded. This is the truth that underlies that common word "bless"—a word used so often that its meaning has well-nigh dropped out of it. That God will bless is the sum of our prayers. We mean by it that God will prosper us, that success may attend our labors, that we may get good things, that we may receive benefits of some kind. And God does bless. He says to every one who becomes His child, "Now that you believe, I would have you begin by thinking of Me as one who will care for you, and give you unspeakable blessings." God began with Abram in this way; it was not hard duty first, and the joy of

reward finally; but the great, glad hope and promise came first. We seem sometimes to trust Providence as if it were a last resort, and think of duty as a noble, yet rather heavy thing to do. But not to such a key is the psalm of believing life to be sung; it is to be caught rather from these ancient words of God, "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." God blesses us in every act of obedience. Obedience is not merely the avoidance of the suffering of a broken law, it yields a positive reward. Whenever a soul hears the divine voice saying, "Thou shalt," and reverently obeys, it finds a deep and peaceful satisfaction.

"I am thy reward." That takes us a step farther, lifts us higher. God imparts Himself, "Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost?" As the greater includes the less, so in giving Himself He gives us all things richly to enjoy. What is there that God does not give to His people? Wisdom? "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and up braideth not." Peace? "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you." Guidance? "I will guide you with My counsel." Supply of need? "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." What is providence, but God caring for His family, causing "all things to work together for their good?" What is heaven, but God gathering all excellency and all good and all glory into one grand, rich testament and giving it over to His people?

"I am thy *great* reward." What can you compare it unto? Earthly crowns and sceptres, human dis-

tinctions and honors, all pale before this great reward, and sink into absolute nothingness. "I am thy *exceeding* great reward." Language labors to find terms sufficiently explicit and comprehensive to compass it. "Exceeding great," outstripping imagination, defying the power of thought. "Fear not, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."

What, then, is our duty ?

1. Fidelity to God. God would build upon this an argument in favor of fidelity. Is He all this to us ? What shall we be to Him ? Ingrates, rebels, enemies ? Nay ; but His love must command our obedience, His condescension must challenge our highest regard, His faithfulness must compel our love.

2. Fearlessness. "He that is with us is more than he that is with them."

"What though a thousand hosts engage,
A thousand worlds, my soul to shake ?
I have a shield shall quell their rage,
And drive the alien armies back ;
Portrayed it bears a bleeding Lamb ;
I dare believe in Jesus' name."

3. Circumspection. "What manner of persons ought ye to be ?" Are ye temples of God ? His temple must not be defiled. Are ye children ? His children must live in harmony with the law of the household. Have ye hope concerning the future ? Let that hope be a purifying hope. Fidelity, fearlessness, circumspection. Cultivate these. God shall be with you, and when at length your feet touch the Jordan, He will whisper again, "Fear not, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

NOT the least important item in the proceedings of a missionary meeting is the reading of the report. I know, indeed, that to some this seems to be a break in the interest of a meeting, but why should it be so? If, during the time of war men wait, with throbbing hearts, to hear the result of a battle that is to decide the destiny of thousands; if the reports of the geologist's researches are hailed with wonderment and delight; or those of the geographer with abiding interest, why should we listen with heavy ear to the report of a society like the one represented to-night, invested, as it is, with a higher character than temporal governments can grant, and engaged in a work transcending in dignity and importance any mere geological or geographical researches? No greater joy thrilled the heart of Jesus than that which He experienced when the seventy returned with their story of victory through His name. And surely, if we be baptized with the same spirit that rested on the

Master, we shall be exalted to fellowship of joy with Him when we hear, as we are told in the report, that His truth is still mighty to save, and that to-day it kindles in the human heart an inspiration, lofty and pure as that which glowed in the heroic men when Christianity was young, and sent them forth in acts of self-sacrifice for God. And yet, I would remember that these reports are but figures of the true. One eye alone reads the full report of a poor Christian laborer; one mind alone, and that mind divine, duly estimates causes and effects. The history of the Church warrants the persuasion that figures fail to estimate the good done in the world through the agency of truth. If, during the Israelitish apostasy, Elijah had formed statistical tables of the Church, he would have put down all the inhabitants of the land in one column, as idolaters; and himself in another column, as the sole relic of a better faith. And yet, God had a reserve of "seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal."

Our reports, sir, give us a condensed and accurate account of those laborers who are openly working in the vineyard; and yet how many earnest laborers find no mention there. The lone widow, who knows nought but her Bible true, and whose heart is a temple where Jesus is enshrined; the care-worn sufferer, whose path winds along beneath the weeping willows, but whose fidelity remains unshaken; the oft-discouraged, but faithful Sunday-school teacher, planting seeds of truth in youthful hearts, and watering them with his tears; the weary sewing-girl, who

speaks words of Christian comfort to her doubting friend; and the young man, who, like Daniel, dares to pray in the face of opposition, and despite the scoffs of his companions, kneels at night to commit himself to the care of the unslumbering Jehovah—these are all co-workers together with God. Silent it may be as the wafture of an angel's wing, but powerful as the light, bearing no heraldic cipher on their shield. But their names are registered in God's great muster-roll, the book of life, as those, who, with sturdy hand or trembling soul, are hasting on the day when the cross shall triumph over every throne of earth, and Jesus shall be sovereign Lord of all.

In advocating the cause of Christian missions, we cannot fail to bow before the magnitude of the end that cause has in view. The salvation of men; the victories of the cross, the enlightenment of the spiritually blind—these, with their imperative claims for sympathy and effort, with their mingled story of toil and triumph, and their bright anticipations of ultimate success, constitute a theme which might well overwhelm us with its greatness. And, sir, when we consider that the Gospel is the only remedy for man; that there is no prescription for the sickness of the soul, but that which is written in the Redeemer's blood; that there is no tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, but that which grows in the paradise of God; and that to us is committed the high trust of making this remedy known to man, we cannot but regard ourselves as placed in a position of distinguished honor and weighty responsibility. In

pleading this cause, we plead interests that possess all the privilege that age can impart. Its germinal idea is far older than historic Christianity.

If we search the records of the Jewish nation, we shall find the missionary principle even there. Whatever may have been the prejudices of the Jewish people against the Gentiles, their religion did not countenance it. Good old Simeon only gave expression to the life-thoughts of his religion when he welcomed the light that was "to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of His people Israel." The Jewish religion, instead of repelling the heathen, invited him to its fold, on the condition of complying with its two great rites, the circumcision and the passover. In Solomon's time, the Gentiles in the land of Israel numbered fifteen thousand souls. It is true, that with the exception of Jonah and Elijah, no Jew was sent forth as modern missionaries are to the surrounding nations; yet the Jew was a lighthouse of hope through long ages of darkness, and all his prophecies indicated that a time would come when the missionary of a loftier faith would call the nations to repentance. Who can think of Jonah going to preach in Nineveh, without having his thoughts carried forward to those better days, when Ephesus and Corinth, Athens and Rome should re-echo to the preaching of men, who would count it their highest joy to preach among the Gentiles "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

I think, sir, there was something more in those events that brought the Jews into contact with the nations of the earth. If you will look at it, you will

find that just as the great centres of civilization rose up one after another, the priest-nation of the world, with its grand and distinctive treasure of revealed truth, was placed among them. Does Egypt become the cradle of arts and sciences? the Jew is mysteriously led thither, then rescued amid signs and wonders, that declare the supremacy of Jehovah. Does Babylon become the "Lady of Kingdoms?" then Judah goes into captivity for seventy years, not only to be cured of infidelity, but to bear such heroic testimony for the true God, that Nebuchadnezzar is forced to exclaim, "Your God is a God of gods, and a King of kings." Do Persia and Media acquire might and majesty? Artaxerxes has Nehemiah for his cup-bearer, and Darius has Daniel for his prime minister, and Cyrus issues a decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Alexander may conquer the world, but he must ride to the gates of the Holy City, and become familiar with those prophecies which foretell his triumph. Does Rome sway the sceptre of universal empire? then Judea becomes a province of the Roman Empire, and Cæsar and Pompey manifest a deep reverence for the temple and its ministers. How worthy of our notice, too, that the last great power of the old world should form unconsciously the link between the Judaism of former and the Christianity of later times. The decree of Augustus brings Mary to Bethlehem, and the mandate of Pilate puts Jesus to death. Thus extensive and important was the mission of the Jewish race. They were to the world what the Baptist was to Christ—"The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." But the Jew lost his religious life, vital piety embalmed itself or sunk into a dead self-righteous formalism. The time drew near for the mission to be transferred to other hands. The Messiah came, and with two exceptions, that of the Syro-phenician woman and the Roman centurion, confined His ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But at the same time He put an end to Jewish exclusiveness. Having in his death accomplished the work of Redemption; he instituted the Christian Church—a new missionary society, not like the old, simply attractive, but aggressive. In the old the convert came into the Church; in the new, the missionary went out to seek the convert. The Christian Church became the evangelist of the world. Then came the day of Pentecost, with its tongues of fire qualifying the missionaries for their work; and with the gospel of mercy on her lips and the baptism of the Spirit on her brow, the infant Church went forth in the Saviour's name, reaching the world by successive steps indicated by her Master. He said that the apostles were to be witnesses for Him in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth. Three thousand converts at Pentecost accomplished the first step; the persecution of Stephen scattered the disciples, and accomplished the second; the preaching of Philip at Samaria accomplished the third; and the last step was accomplished when Cornelius was baptized and when the events recorded in the 11th chapter of Acts took place. From Antioch went

out the first mission to the heathen. And its results enabled Paul to say, "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place."

It were beside our purpose to speak of the constant development of the missionary spirit in the Church. The history of the Christian Church is one vast missionary report, containing one unbroken record of hard work done for God, and the most glorious successes. But men say, after all this preparatory work through the agency of the Jew, and all these centuries of Christian effort, what is the result? Ah, sir, impatience here is often our besetting sin. We are often like children who plant a seed, and the next day dig it up to see if it has commenced to grow, and are disappointed if it has not. We forget time is an element of all God's dealings. Slow was the preparation of the globe as man's abode, and slow was the preparation of the world for the grand crisis of Redemption. God has not always willed that great results should grow rapidly, or spring from easy victories. Canon Liddon, the celebrated preacher of St. Paul's, in London, has been seriously devoting many afternoon services to the question, "Has Christianity declined?" And a great many others are exercising themselves over that same question. I have read of a French ecclesiastic who was so in the habit of beginning his answer to any question proposed, with the words "I distinguish," that he came to be known by the name of "Distinguish." The Archbishop of Paris determined to foil him one day, and he

asked him, "Abbe, is it lawful to baptize with broth?" "I distinguish," promptly replied the Abbe, "if it be such rich soup as you, monseigneur, are in the habit of eating, undoubtedly it is unlawful; but if it is such poor stuff as we poor cures feed upon, why it differs so little from water that it may very well be used for the purpose."

Well, sir, as to this question of the decline of Christianity, I say, "I distinguish between the Christianity of Rome and the Ritualists and the Christianity of the New Testament—and I say that the Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount; the Christianity whose essence is compressed into the two great commandments; the Christianity of the parable of the Prodigal Son—that Christianity is in no way on the decline. Sojourner Truth, a poor old Negro woman, when her white teacher was telling her that slavery would last forever, she asked, "Ah, massa, is God dead?" So I ask in relation to the fancied decline of Christianity? When John Bunyan, in his marvellous dream, pictures the inner life of man, as a progress from the city of Sin, far up to the Beulah land of peace and the Celestial City, he places before us, not only the story of a single man, but of the human race. And in that great progress of the race there is no turning back. Sometimes the contest is with some hidden, brutal Apollyon of vice or violence; sometimes with the mingled fooleries and fopperies of Vanity Fair; and sometimes far on in the road, even when we have climbed the Delectable Mountains and have seen the Gates of Paradise, there yet frowns overhead

the awful dungeon of Doubting Castle, and Despair mauls us with his club. But still the progress goes on and on forever. We don't stand now, the world don't stand now, where Bunyan stood when he spent his years in Bedford jail. Bedford jail would be an impossibility now, thank God. And this grand progress of the race must and will go on, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, until the last foe is vanquished, the last snare broken, the last river crossed, and the light and glory of the goodly city shall rest upon the world, and all nations rejoice because of it.

If Christianity were to decline, what would become of the world? This old world can only be uplifted and saved by a system that is an embodiment of disinterested love, and Christianity alone is such a system. Selfishness lies at the bottom of everything else. Men talk about commerce. Selfishness is at the bottom of that. Why did the ancient Phœnicians and Latins plant their colonies? Why did Tyre, Nineveh and Babylon trade with the nations of the East? Why did Grecian caravans go to Phœnicia, or ancient ships traverse the Mediterranean Sea? It was not to permeate darker regions with intenser light, but for the double purpose of self-aggrandizement, and to devolve from themselves the crushing burden of their own poor. What did the East India Company do for India? Will any one say that it gave to that land aught that would regenerate the race? Bibles, churches and schools are there, but they came there, not by government institutions, but by Christian agency and missionary effort, in the very teeth of

Government. What has commerce done for the Indians of this continent? Egerton Young told a thrilling story of an old Indian at Beren's River. He had seen this old chief on his first visit to that post. On his second visit he was dead. Before his death he called the tribe around him, and said, "Children, when the missionary comes again listen to him and obey him; embrace his religion. I can't live till he comes, and I must have some religion to die by; bring the drum and the medicine man." The drum was brought, and the medicine man put the sticks into his hand, that were rapidly stiffening in death, and then, said the Indians, "He began to beat, and as he beat he bowed, and as he bowed he stayed, and as he stayed he died, and fell across his drum." Oh, that is where commerce leaves the Indian to die, across their drum. That is what it leaves them. It gives them nothing. Yes, it does. It gives rum to frenzy them, disease to waste them, and the chicanery of civilization to enhance their treachery. Our Evans, Stevens, Cases, McDougalls and Youngs, who have gone to them with the simple story of the cross, have given to the Indian mind all of the clearness, and to the Indian home all of the happiness it possesses.

And men talk of modern literature. But into what barbarous clime has it ever entered to dispense its treasures. It has gone abroad to acquire, not to dispense. It has explored the ruins of Athens, Egypt and Italy, to rifle them of their monuments of ancient culture, but never to erect nobler monuments of modern culture. No, sir, it is the missionary, with

the Book of God in his hand and the baptism of the Spirit on his brow, that achieves this. And he works only for this purpose. Toiling through days of labor and nights of weariness he constructs alphabets, grammars and lexicons to smooth the pathway of approach to Christ; and then, standing on the pinnacle of success, he exclaims, "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto Thy name be all the glory."



THE GOSPEL THE WANT OF THE AGE.

A MISSIONARY SPEECH.

I AM strongly in favor of these annual missionary meetings. To me they seem to subserve largely that most important law of life—the law of sympathetic impulse. I have often admired the action of God in this respect, in His dealings with the Jewish people. You know that at stated times God called the twelve tribes to His footstool; constituted them into a grand anniversary gathering, and in this way infused into them a new life, gave them a stimulus to the maintenance of weekly worship in the humble synagogue; and, above all, taught them to think oft and deeply of the fact that they were a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. So, too, with meetings like the present, to observe them as an act of love to God, and to make their chief end the renewal of social and spiritual energies, is to go from strength to strength, and fulfil one of the constant conditions of spiritual life. They largely stimulate vital piety, kindle it into a lambent flame, develop the spirit of Saviourship in Christian hearts, and help to sustain a faith exposed to the roughest assaults of scepticism and public disfavor.

And, sir, not only do these gatherings thus stimulate the faith and energy of the Church, but aiming, as they do, to promote Christian sympathy, and pledge the Church to the great work of multiplying the truth of God and spreading abroad the glad tidings of the Gospel, they place themselves in harmony with another great law—I mean the law of diffusion. You find the workings of that law everywhere. You see it in God. He garners, not to hoard, but to scatter. He stores light and heat in the sun, not for deposit, but diffusion. He accumulates the wealth of waters in oceans, lakes and rivers as grand reservoirs, whence to scatter the refreshing dew and fertilizing shower over the thirsty earth. And so it is, too, with civilization. The civilizing forces of society are garnered in libraries, universities, schools and churches as grand rendezvous, whence they are to emerge to educate and enfranchise the world.

And again, sir, this same law governs the action and development of the human mind. No mind satisfies its normal condition by simple reception. God has so ordained that he who would have a capacious soul and large mental and moral stores must be not only constantly receiving, but constantly communicating. By the very constitution of mind, every thought flashing upon it, or feeling evoked within it, instinctively struggles for external expression. The mind endeavors to express itself through the eye, making it radiant with light—or, rather, making it flash with intelligence; or through the countenance, making it radiant with light, like Moses coming down from the

mount, or Stephen going up to the shining ones ; or through the tongue, making it eloquent ; or through the fingers, making them nimble and skilful. Scientific and philosophic productions that have blessed the world—the printing press, steam engine, the telegraph, and the multiplied inventions that have elevated society—would have slumbered and died in the souls in which they were conceived but for this law of diffusion.

Now, sir, this same law, grasping great truths and powerful emotions, and then inspired and sanctified by the spirit of Christ, and intensified by a burning love for souls, and pressed down with the weight of divine command, becomes irresistible in the propagation of religious truth and feeling. It holds the mastery over a man, and flings him out into the world an unheralded iconoclast to demolish the idols of society, to break down barriers, and to lift up the race out of its well-worn grooves into a higher plane of social, civil and religious living. It makes men aggressive innovators and revolutionists. It lays under contribution all the powers of the man.

I fancy, sir, it was this very thing that the shepherd king of Israel felt long ages ago, and which he says was like fire shut up in his bones ; and when he meditated upon those great truths struggling for expression the fire kindled into a flame, and his soul began to glow. Every mental and moral power was instinct with a diviner life, and then he spake, nor could he help speaking. It gives a man heat as well as illumination ; makes him not only a shining light, but a burn-

ing light, in the world. And so it always is. You remember when the early disciples were scattered by the persecution that culminated in the martyrdom of Stephen, they fled everywhere through the community, like scintillations blown from the divine altar; and with their hearts throbbing with new-found truths and with their hearts glowing with their new experience, it was no marvel that men were constrained to listen to them and become converted. So, too, when Luther, who pored over that old Bible when chained in his cell, drank inspiration from its luminous and life-giving pages, it sent him out into the world a mighty Reformer. He shook society to its very depths; human institutions rocked upon their hoary foundations, papal thrones trembled, and a spirit of life swept from the centre to the circumference of the entire nationality. And so it is everywhere. Convictions produced by the living truth of the Gospel are the power of the Christian.

When the Gospel makes its advent into the soul, it not only takes possession of the head and the heart, but the feet and hands and tongue. It sends a man out into society a very John the Baptist, crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Nor can he help crying. As soon command the thunder to cease its roar, or the lightning to sleep in its cloud-bed, or the incoming tide to roll back its billows, or the wheels of the chariot of time to reverse their motion, as to bid religion lie silent in a soul. Why, it seems to me that a man attempting to suppress burning Vesuvius or padlock the expanding jaws of a devouring earth-

quake, is not a more pitiable sight than a man, or a council, or a nation of men, attempting to silence a Christian when the warm eternal truth of Christ is burning in his heart. You may fling him into a wilderness, and, as in the case of John the Baptist, cities will go out to listen to his voice. You may hurl him into a dungeon, and make his feet fast in the stocks, and, as in the case of Paul and Silas, an earthquake will summon a congregation for him; or you may thrust him into a cell, and, as in the case of the Bedford Tinker, the millions of Christendom will gather to listen, entranced, to his immortal dream. Popes may anathematize, curse and doom, but Dollinger will protest and Hyacinthe will assert his freedom to think for himself and get married. Any man who lives out the Gospel must be mighty. He has chained to his chariot the steeds of the skies; he has enlisted the forces of omnipotence; he has linked to his enterprise laws that are mightier than the revolutions of the spheres.

But, sir, let it be borne in mind that if we are to wield the sword of the Spirit with such grand effect it won't do to have a mere surface experience of the vitalizing power of the Gospel. There must be something more than truth embodied in creeds and churches; there must be more than a name to live. It must be truth incorporated in our very being, Christ always coming into the heart, the Holy Ghost always shed abroad. If it be true—and I believe Church history says it is true—that churches in their earlier history are usually most powerful, aggressive and success-

ful, it is simply because they are possessed by the Gospel; convictions are deep, experiences are thorough, and services all pulsate and tremble with divine life. The danger with churches is that with the lapse of time convictions should become superficial and experience shallow; the soul drops out, and the skeleton body is there, beautiful, tricked out with the flowers of profession; but the soul gone, and hence in the body no powers of locomotion. And, depend upon it, sir, that while we want religion we want the old-fashioned religion—the religion that inspired the men of Galilee, that stood forth in its sublime simplicity and singularity amid the trappings of Cæsar's household. This is what we want to cope with the worldliness and multiplied evils of this age. Your professors of religion, whose piety is so pliable and accommodating that it can accord with the glare of the dance and the rattle of the billiard-table, whose mind-food is drawn as much from Dickens as from Moses, as much from Charles Reade as from St. Paul, are not the men of whom it will ever be said: "The men that have turned the world upside down have come hither also."

I hear a great deal of talk about making religion attractive. Beautify the rainbow. Add brightness to the sun. If you want religion to be attractive, *live it*. If you want to attract men, hold up the cross on which hangs the Divine Man, who said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." If you want to sing a song that will be as sweetness to the ear, sing one of the songs of Zion. If you want to walk in a path in which you would have others travel,

climb the slopes of Calvary. Oh, sir, what we want most of all, is a church like that form of womanly beauty seen in the Apocalypse, clothed with the sun, bright as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners. "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." Sir John Herschell tells us, in one of his deeply interesting scientific works, that the solid body of the sun is not luminous, but that it is clothed with three atmospheres, of which the two lower are dark, and the third, alone, is the blazing photosphere, which diffuses light and glory over creation. Well, just such a photosphere is the spirit of true living piety around the Church. Without this it is a dark body. It may be of great magnitude, and, like all great bodies, draw objects to itself, but it is the living love and holiness that shines.

But, sir, perhaps some one here asks, what has all this to do with the cause of Christian missions? I reply, it has a great deal to do with that cause. The law of Christian agency is very much like the law of social agency. The first requisite of the social system is self culture, the second is the culture of others, and that second is suspended on fidelity to the first. We must acquire before we can transfer. Social improvement works outward towards the circumference, from the individual to the family, and then to the community. So with the Church. First, its own spirituality, then the vicinity will feel the contagion, and then in its outward course, multiplying with kindred influences, it swells into a tide that rolls over all the land and goes out to the farthest boundaries of the world. The

missionary spirit doesn't kindle the life of the Church, the life of the Church must kindle the missionary spirit. The missionary spirit is not the cause, but an index of the cause. The one is a fountain, the other is a stream. All vital power acts from the centre, and fills up a sphere in proportion to its vigor. Feebleness at the deep seat of life, generates inefficiency at the extremities. If there is inefficiency of the limbs, you may be sure there is weak palpitation of the heart. I can't explain how prayer on behalf of others is answered, but I know it is so. And I know that when the Church at home is agonizing with God in prayer, the heathen feel it and the missionary feels it. And I know that if this hour the Methodist Church in Canada were to rise to the loftiness of faith, and glow with apostolic ardor, along those mysterious lines that God has formed and planned, that new life would flash and vibrate, until the most distant missionary amid the snows of the North-West would feel it, as though a breath from the other world fanned his cheek, and the waves of the broad Pacific would present no barrier, but across them that sympathy would flash to the shores of Japan, and the devoted toilers there would know it, and rejoice because of it.

Permit me further, to add in this relation, that there never was an age that needed this religious life more than the age in which we live. Men may deride it; science, false science, may scout the idea; socialists and free-thinkers may laugh at it, but human society reposes, when it reposes at all, on religion. Civilization without it is like the lights that play on the

northern sky—a momentary flash on the face of darkness, ere it settles into night. Wit and wisdom, sublime purity and lofty philosophy cannot save a nation, else ancient Greece had never perished. Valor, law, ambition, cannot preserve a people, else Rome had still been the mistress of the world.

The nation that loses faith in God loses not only its most precious jewel, but its unifying and conserving force. Men of science may wish to substitute natural selection for creation—shut God out from man and man from God—but they would only divert from the world the river of life, and leave it a barren wilderness. Philosophical politicians may preach as the final substitute of the Gospel, a prudential morality. The positivist, after banishing God from heaven and history, may worship humanity; and infidelity, in its modernized and subtle forms, may sit as a weird old sage, and with sad eye watch humanity shooting Niagara, as Coleridge puts it, and then cry, “Whence, whither, how?” But, oh, how little can these do for this old, weary world, to still its mournful wailings, to heal its broken hearts, and restore its lapsed lives.

No, sir, this age needs religion, not the religion of Channing, a mere human invention; not the religion of Rome, or semi-papal ritualism, approaching evil with the delicate rap of the kid-covered knuckle or the button-hole touch of a superannuated remonstrance; but the Gospel according to Jesus, that, like the brawny Entellas in Virgil, buries its cestras deep in the head of the ox, and lays it, quivering, at the altar front—a divine religion, lofty as heaven, yet stooping

low as the meanest upon earth, issuing warm from the heart of God to enter meek, yet mighty, into the heart of man.

Sir, your missionaries preach such a Gospel; your Missionary Society believes in such a Gospel; your Church has all the great elements and principles of such a Gospel embodied in her articles, and I believe, sir, that she holds them in such a way, and preaches them in such a way that she inscribes their grand universalities upon her theological banners, that she is so free from ecclesiastical complications and time-serving traditions, that her church organization is such, and that her missionary interests are such as give her peculiar advantages in the prosecution of her work. And that is the reason we claim your sympathy and support. I don't want any one to think that I am trying to apologize for our existence as a denomination. We have got out of the apologetic age. The last century was full of apologies—apologies of the Bible, evidences of Christianity, and apologies of religion. Press and pulpit were devoted to the proof that God had an existence and that man had a conscience. But we have got out of that apologetic age, which was an inert one. I say, then, I am not here to apologize for the fact of living in this age. Our work must be our defence, and if it is not, we don't deserve any countenance or support. An old church legend tells of one of the ancient saints to whom the prince of darkness once appeared as an angel of light, saying, "I am Christ." But the old saint looked at him, and cried out, "Where is the print of the nails?" and

instantly the devil vanished. So I say of every church, "Where are the marks of your high and holy calling; burning charity for souls; witnesses in the form of men whom you have instrumentally turned from sin to holiness?" Have you a converted ministry? Who can say:

"What we have felt and seen
With confidence we tell."

And have you a godly membership in the Spirit and by the activities of a consecrated and regenerated life, casting in the precious seed, and looking prayerfully for the reaping, the garnerage and the harvest home? If so, that church is a living church; God is in the midst of her, and He will not let her die. As soon would I look for the advancing chariot of the Redeemer to turn backward on its track as to look for the funeral train of such a church. I need not detain you by showing how, by the grace of God, these evidences of a divine call are found in the society which we represent. The report does that. You all accept the fact of their existence.

And now I appeal to you on behalf of this great cause—the cause of the lone missionary separated from the gentler amenities of life; the cause of precious souls, perishing for lack of knowledge; the cause of the divine Redeemer, who gave His life for the world, and has commissioned His Church to bring that world to His feet. You are not called upon to give yourselves to this work; but you are called upon to give of your substance, and to give as God has prospered you. You contribute to a cause that is sure to succeed. If you are connected with any particular politi-

cal party, that party may be up or down; or with any particular trade, you may prosper or fail; but if you are connected with the cause of Christ you are connected with a cause that lives on when empires die, and politics and controversies go out forever. You may not live to see another missionary meeting, but if you work for God now, your work will endure. President Lincoln said, as he stood on bloody Gettysburg, "Eloquent words will be forgotten, but the deeds of our soldiers will never die." And your Christian deeds will live. The work of a Christian can never die. It is a work whose effects grasp eternity for their duration. It is a work which erects immortal trophies on earth to the glory of redeeming grace. It is a work which swells the tide of human happiness here, till it breaks over the boundaries of earth and floods the hereafter with its fulness. It is a work which lightens the universe with manifestations of Jehovah's presence, and pours on the vision of angel and archangel the glory of the Godhead. Christian believer, I may, without presumption, say that that hand of yours can touch the robe of majesty that clothes the eternal and unfold its brightness to the gaze of seraphs and the transports of a universe.

"Then rouse thee to thy work of high and holy love,
And thou an angel's recompense shall know,
The good begun by thee shall onward flow
In many a branching stream, and wider grow.

"The seed that in these few and fleeting hours
Thy hands unwearied here have sown,
Shall deck thy grave with amaranthine flowers,
And yield thee fruits divine in heaven's ambrosial bowers."

OUR METHODIST HERITAGE.

AN ADDRESS

Delivered at the Reception of the Candidates for Ordination at the Toronto Conference, in Port Hope, June, 1879.

IT is impossible to be associated with a gathering like the present, without having one's heart deeply moved. Irresistibly there comes to us the thought of those who were wont to be present at these Conference services, but who have passed home to their reward. Not a few brethren have finished their course this year, some with the bloom of youth upon their cheek, and some with the wrinkles of age; and to-night we gratefully recall their names, their counsels, their toils, and bless God on their behalf. The venerated names of Father Corson, Asahel Hurlburt, John Ryerson and William Philp, of the London Conference; and Dr. Green and William Andrews, of our own Conference, who were living benedictions in our midst, have been glorified and crowned since last Conference, while the brethren here present, who, like myself, have not as yet attained the middle age, have been admonished by the fall of some who gave promise twelve months ago of many years of service. "Thanks be unto God, who gave them the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Would it, sir, be wrong to indulge the fancy, or is it only fancy, that amidst the felicities of heaven they still think of us. On the shores of the Adriatic, the fishermen's wives are wont to go down to the beach when the chime for vespers strikes, and the night promises to be dark and stormy, and there lift up their voices, as only Italian women can, singing some song with a long, lingering note at the end of each verse, for a refrain; and when this beautiful swell of harmony has got well out to sea, they pause and listen for a response; and by-and-by their husbands and brothers, far out of sight, send back the song, and it comes beating across the waters, softened by the distance and mellowed by the night. Then the women know that all is safe, and retire contented to their work, in hope of a sure meeting with their home-friends soon. I cannot say that those who have left us here and have sailed out on that mysterious main, all round this living world, do even attempt to echo our music back again. But I feel sure that they hear what we sing in praise of our common Redeemer. At all events, it is a fine thing to think of them as the Conference year strikes its evening chime. Oh, that the mantles of the ascending Elijahs may rest upon the young Elishas, their successors in the holy work and sacred office.

I am sure, sir, that I represent the feeling of all the younger brethren of this Conference, when I express thankfulness to Almighty God for sparing so many of the fathers amongst us still. At the close of the council of Nice, the Emperor invited the assembled

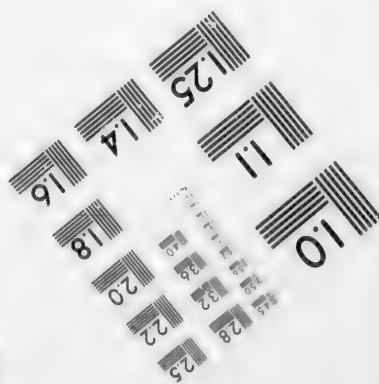
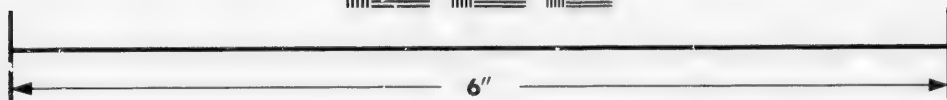
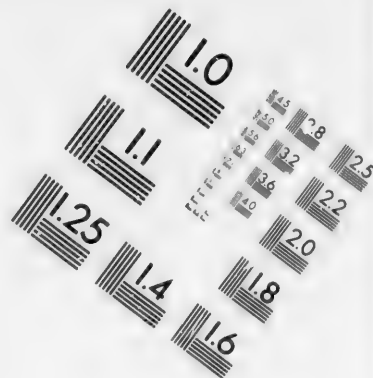
Bishops to a banquet. They all attended, and the sight surprised all expectations. The imperial guards were drawn up around the vestibule with drawn swords. The procession passed through the glittering ranks without fear, but not without tears, to think that the swords of the empire, heretofore drawn for their destruction, were now drawn for their honor and protection. The Emperor presided, and as the feast went on, called to his side one and another of the Bishops, and loaded them with gifts. At length he called Paphrotius, the crippled martyr, who was his special guest. He threw his arms around him, put his lips to his eyeless sockets, stroked down with imperial touch the frightful wound, and pressed the royal purple to his paralyzed limbs. Sir, these honored brethren need not our commendation nor our sympathy, but they will not refuse us the opportunity of saying, that we rejoice in the privilege of being associated with them here, and to say, that we look into our future, which shall be the present of another generation, and hope to do as well for them as they have done for us. By God's help, we will not mar the inheritance that a venerable past has bequeathed to us, but will hand it in an unmutilated form to those who are to come after us.

And then, sir, I thank God that while the tombs of God's servants are multiplying and age and infirmities are laying others aside from the stirring activities of this ministry, the young, as we see to-night, are pressing forward to fill up the ranks, to hold up the standard, to win men to a holy allegiance to God and

His truth. They have given evidence of their fitness for this work, and most cordially do I second the resolution so ably moved by Dr. Wood—that they be received into full connexion with this Conference, and be recommended for ordination.

I would like to encourage and stimulate them as well as myself, by glancing for a few minutes at our position as a Church to-day, at what we have, at what we are capable of doing, and, therefore, at what we must do to live.

1. There has come to us a precious heritage of doctrine. We know what we believe, we know what every Methodist preacher, when he goes from this Conference to his circuit, will preach. It's a good thing for a Church to be able to say, in this free age, we have a creed. Some time ago one of the Toronto pastors—not a Methodist pastor—announced in the *Globe* that on a certain Sabbath he would preach on "Jelly-fish Christians." Jelly-fish, that's a church without a creed. I'd rather have cat-fish than jelly-fish, something with a back-bone in it. We have a defined system of doctrine. Prominent in that system stands the fact that every Methodist can say to every man, "To you is the word of salvation sent." I thank God for being taught to believe in a universal atonement. Men may talk about God making a vessel of honor or dishonor out of this human clay, as the potter does out of the clay from the quarry beds; or of throwing material away as the potter's apprentice does in some moment of caprice. But I understand the Bible to teach that God has reserved to Himself



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no right to call into life a single worm and make its life a curse unto itself. I go out into Nature and find that she will produce her fruits and flowers for the humblest slave. The roses bloom as sweetly around the poor washerwoman's door as they do around Queen Victoria's palace. The bird will chant its matin or its vesper on the branches which sweep the low roof of the mechanic as willingly as on the vines trained on the costly trellis of the rich man's mansion. Perfumes attach to the winds, and light is visible in the uncompressing atmosphere for all. Nature knows no law of primogeniture, but offers her goods to her children in the justice of an impartial love. Does the hand plant the flower and care for it, then will the flower grow and bloom, be the hand that of the mistress covered with jewels, or that of the servant browned with the sun. I go out into the great world, and I see that it opens to all its doors of success and happiness. Into literature Homer may march, though poor and blind, and Æsop, though a slave. Has not science welcomed every Faraday to its fame and majesty? Has not poetry gladly received a Scotch plough-boy or an Ettrick shepherd? and has not the door of statesmanship turned on its heavy hinges when the rude backwoodsman has read wisdom by the light of a pine-knot, or felled the tree while thinking upon the rights and wrongs of man? And surely, He who permits His sunlight to fall on all, and for all who plant them His roses to bloom, and His fruit to ripen, and who has flung open the gates of honor to the cottager as well as the prince; has built a temple

of salvation over whose portals is written in characters large and legible, "All who will, may enter here." Blessed be God for an atonement wide as the world and deep as the range of human want.

Then, coming over to the human side, we have the great and solemn fact of human freedom. I am born into this world a king over a kingdom of freedom, separated from every other by the length and breadth of the moral government of the universe, by all the attributes of the great white throne. Encased behind this freedom, in spite of God's awakened wrath, and unkindled hells, and fiery tempests of hot displeasure, I can plunge on through the eternities, mocking alike the mercy that saves and the wrath that torments, able to accept the salvation of Christ, or able to reject it forever.

Then we have salvation by faith, not by works, not by individual merit, but by simple faith; faith, not the mere belief of a statement, but the trust of the heart; and then we have the witness of the Spirit, God's own notification of our adoption into His family; both of them truths of great antiquity, the truths of the Reformation, the truths of apostolic times, but truths on which the dust of oblivion had gathered a fathom deep, until our fathers exhumed them and breathed the life into them.

And then, on the back of all this, we have a full salvation to preach, a salvation from the uttermost extremity of guilt, from the deepest alienation from God; a salvation to the uttermost of human need, so that we can walk in the light of God and be blame-

less ; a salvation into the uttermost degree of blessedness, which God has in store for them who overcome through the blood of the Lamb.

Sir, with such a body of truth, we can go to the vilest and say there is hope for you. Let us be loyal to the doctrines of our Church and preach them fully. We may bring out our muskets and fill them to the muzzle with anti-Darwinism and anti-Tyndall powder, and fire them off, and nobody will care ; but preaching the old-fashioned truths that have come down to us crowned with the achievements of eighteen centuries, we shall, as our fathers were, be mighty in word and in doctrine, and we shall sweep from the field, doubt and the worldliness of sin.

2. A rich heritage of hymnody.

All along the ages God's people have been a singing people. Rising from the shores of the Red Sea, floating over the plains of Esdraelon, and pouring from the tuned harp of the kingly palace at Jerusalem, came the songs of Miriam and Deborah and David. The song of the angels filling earth and heaven with its jubilant strains ; the sweet Hallel of the passover, sung with wondrous significance, as Christ and His disciples went out into the Mount of Olives ; and the midnight hymns of Paul and Silas in the inner prison, their feet fastened in the stocks, their backs welted and rigid and stained with unwashed gore, fall upon our ears, and the ears of God and angels, and shall go ringing down the centuries. Then, from many a little group of early Christians in their private houses or subterranean chapels, come the songs that go down to

meet the hymns of Clement and Gregory, and St. Hilary and Ambrose, and St. Bernard and Bede; and while their songs are yet lingering in our ears, the sound of Luther's trumpet voice rises grandly in strains that startle the nations, breathing out, "A stronghold our God is still," the imperishable pæans of the Reformation. Then, after a little pause, during which the voices of many are hushed in exile, blood and death, a new reformation breaks forth, and the world is again ringing with Christian song. Watts and Doddridge and Montgomery, and Cowper and Newton, and a host of others are heard; but rising above them all, the sublime, spiritual, inimitable songs of the Wesleys and Thomas Olivers. Oh, what a history this old book has! How its music and theology have stolen into the hearts of black-faced colliers, and many of the elite of Great Britain. How it has been sung in the backwoods cabin of this country. How it has woken the echoes as the saddle-bag men lifted up their voices while passing from one appointment to another. How it has rung out at camp-meetings and quarterly gatherings. How many on its wings have gone up from sick-beds and passed into the opened heavens. Brethren, let us be loyal to the hymn-book. There are defects in it—the sun has spots—there is work for our Hymn-book Committee to do, though I hope they won't use the knife too freely. I have all confidence in their judgment, and feel it is safe in their hands. But as it is it stands without an equal. You may put down your "Moody and Sankey," and "Waves," and "Organs," and "Sunshine

and Golden Hours," and I wouldn't give "Jesus, Lover of my soul," for a whole continent of such. You may sing, "Climb Zion's Hill," but I'll sing, "Leader of faithful souls, and Guide of all who travel to the skies." You may sing, "There's a land that is fairer than day," but I'll prefer, "I see a world of spirits bright." You may sing, "In God I have found a retreat," but I'll sing, "Ah, show me that happiest place!" Let us keep singing our own hymns. Keep them in the prayer-meeting, keep them in the Sunday-school, sing them in our classes, sing them at our penitent-benches. They will spread no Plymouthism, they will vitiate no taste, but they will exalt sentiment and devotion, and be a powerful help to the pulpit in bringing men to God and keeping them in the way of life.

3. The inspiration of a grand heroism.

The history of Methodism is the history of a divinely baptized heroism. Bishop Simpson, some years ago, gave in a sermon before the British Conference, a fine picture of the great hero of the first century of Christ, the merest outline of which is all that I can recall. "I see him yonder, he has been preaching in a certain city, and they carry him without the walls, the missiles fall thick and fast upon him, till they leave him, thinking he is dead. I follow him to another city; they arrest him there, the robe is taken from his shoulders, and a strong man lays on the lash, "forty strokes save one," and his body is all a gory wound. Again I follow him; he has been a day and a night on the deep, and, drawn out, he falls exhausted upon the

shore. I put my hand upon him, I beg him to stop preaching and to save his life. I bend my ear to his lips, and he falters out, "None of these things move me." I follow him to a prison in Rome; he sits down to write his last letter to Timothy, and if there is a misgiving in his heart, if he is sad and sorry, if he has sacrificed too much, it will come out now. I look over his shoulder and read the writing, "Timothy, my own son in the Gospel, I desire that you give up the ministry, it will cost you too much. I'm sorry that I sacrificed my early manhood, sorry that I've come to Rome, and that now, in my old age, I am going to be put to death." Is that it? No no; but this flows from his pen, "I am ready to be offered." O ye heroes of Thermopylæ, and Marathon, and Waterloo, and Balaklava, stand back in the presence of this Paul, the aged, who dies with the world beneath his feet, the grandest hero of history.

Now, sir, what Paul was to the first century of Christianity, the early Methodist itinerant was to the first century of Methodism. Let me give you another's sketch of him. He is of middle height, neither lank nor flabby. Occasional meals ensure no corpulency. His step is quick, his stride is long, for the imperious "Go" of the Galilean is ringing behind him, and the King's business requires haste. He mounts a horse, the best the country can produce. If Wesley's sermon on the resurrection be true, that horse will have good pasturage on the other side, for he did a good share of evangelistic work, and knew as much as some evangelists of our day. The circumstances of this man of

God are his servants. A stump, a kitchen, a waggon, a chair, serve him for a pulpit, as well as a box on the shoulders of male angels, and better, too. Wherever he can get space to stand and an ear to hear, he has the conditions for answering the purposes of his calling. He is self-reliant, for he is in the path of duty. He hastens round the circuit of duties, a messenger from God, with warnings for the heedless, points for the obdurate, courage for the timid, arguments for the doubting, mercy for the penitent and salvation for the believing. Toiling amidst scenes of childhood he is watched as a stranger; meeting all the duties of a citizen, he endures privation like a foreigner. Rising above the boundary lines of human geographies, he finds his fatherland everywhere. Poor, he has the pearl of great price, and enriches many. Maligned, he lifts up the fallen and clothes with righteousness the outcast. Cursed, he changes the maledictions of enemies into blessings, by the meekness of his endurance, and the heroism of his faith. Persecuted, he returns mercy for missiles, and answers shouts of derision with prayers and pardons. He is too full of his immortal idea to be killed, and too intimate with God to be hurt. Wearing Elijah's cloak, he rebukes sin; rising in Elijah's chariot, he forsakes or escapes it. That's the hero of the first century of Methodism.

Sir, we have a noble heroic ancestry. Standing to-night in the presence of a great cloud of witnesses, gone up to God from fields of Methodistic toils, we catch, I hope, the spirit of these noble men and women of the earlier time, and God helping, we will play

neither the part of the coward nor the craven, but prove ourselves worthy successors of the noblest race of men that ever trod Canadian soil.

4. Church government and order.

I think I may say that there has come to us the heritage of a noble church government and order. I am not going to glorify Methodism by trying to lower other churches. If there be one branch of the Church in which it is a special sin to be narrow and sectarian, that branch is the Methodist branch, the heir and debtor of every pre-existing form of Christianity in government and order. We inherit very much from the early apostolic churches, we inherit much from the Mediæval Church, with all its faults; we inherit immensely from the Reformed Church, we owe much to the Lutheran, Calvinistic and Anglican, which were the three great branches of the Reformation, we owe very much to the Puritan, which was an offset, and came more from the Calvinist than from anybody else. The fact is, the two great English forms of Christianity, the Puritan and the Anglican, were better represented under the roof of the rectory at Epworth than under that of any other house in England, and therefore in the early training of the first agents of Methodism we had both these forms of Christianity preparing for the upspringing of Methodism. And after they had done their best, Oxford did what *it* could do; and when Oxford had done its best, then Providence takes the future messengers of Methodism, and upon the waves of the Atlantic He brings the influence of the German mind

and the simple forms of the Moravian brethren ; and then, when it was beginning to grow strong, the vivid, incisive passion, the pure, bright, French mind of Fletcher came into the midst of the stirring English mind and the somewhat dreamy German minds that were then at work ; and God launched it forth, declaring by the very circumstances of its origin and growth that He never intended it to be for one race, one country, one time, but for all races, all countries and all times.

Methodism was never evolved from any man's inner consciousness, as the German evolved the camel. It is a growth in things. Believers met together for religious counsel and to make weekly contributions for benevolence, and almost before they knew, the class-meeting was encircling the world with its songs ; and when the life of God in the soul seeking for expression that gave birth to the class-meeting indicates something better than the class-meeting, I'll go in for abolishing it, but never till then. Richard Maxwell, a layman, began to preach, and Wesley, in alarm, went and talked with him, and found out that he preached because he couldn't help it ; it was the outgrowth of life ; and all our local lay agency came into being. If Wesley were alive to-day, I don't know but he would let women preach. He knew they were good at lecturing, why shouldn't they be good at preaching ? " You're singing out of tune," he cried one day, to a woman. " My heart is singing right, sir," she replied. " Then sing on," said he. A right heart covered a great many defects with Wesley.

Speaking of preaching suggests the Methodist plan of training for the ministry, which has grown up from the first amongst us, and which, I hope, we shall never relinquish. We have never favored training and education for the ministry—that is, that men should be selected by friends and educated that they should enter the ministry as a profession. We hold that when God, by His spirit, calls men into the ministry, and the Church recognizes them as so called, it is proper to fit them *in* the ministry for the work to which God has called them. It is education *in*, and not *for*, the ministry to which we are attached. Trial first, ordination afterward. First, be sure that God has called the man, and then give him the broadest culture and training possible. Some of our people are afraid that our colleges make men unnatural, that they become feeble imitators of the professors, and if ever such a thing takes place it is a terrible calamity. We believe in culture, but we believe in retaining individuality. If there is a lion in a man, I wouldn't begin to pare his nails, or trim his mane, or tone his voice, or tame his spirit; but I'd let his claws grow, let his teeth lengthen, let his mane thicken, let his eye brighten, let his thunder deepen, let his spirit wax, until by his roaring he sends terror to all the haunts of wickedness, and dismay to all the dens of iniquity. There is just as much that is æsthetic about a lion as about a lap-dog. We want majesty, and sublimity, and grandeur, and glory, as well as beauty.

Then as to the discipline of the Church. I heard a venerable minister once say on this Conference plat-

form, before the union, that the two great principles of the Methodist discipline were superintendency and subordination. Well, I suppose that was true of the discipline of which he spoke, particularly of the subordination part. But we have had a new discipline since then. An old farmer once said, he got a new sled that was so perfect that it broke up all his old sleds; and we have a new discipline that has broken a good many of the old things, but it hasn't broken superintendency and subordination. I don't like the subordination as well as the superintendency, except when some one wants to superintend me, and then I am not much in love with either. But, seriously, I believe we have a Church polity sufficiently conservative and sufficiently elastic to adapt itself from time to time to the exigencies of the day. Even the Stationing Committee is a fine institution, and so is the Quarterly Board; and when the one asks me to go to a circuit, in the interests of which I am disposed to sacrifice myself, I always take it kindly, when the others sanctions such a self-denying spirit. That is the carrying out the two great principles of superintendency and subordination.

And now, sir, with the memory of the departed good fresh in our hearts, with the rich heritage of doctrine and hymnody, and heroism and Church polity sacredly committed to us, with the solemn but encouraging sight of these young men before us being received into this ministry, prior to their ordination to the grandest life-work within the reach of any man on earth, and with the new Conference year before

us, let us arm ourselves for the conflict—for conflict there will be. Conflict with greed of gain, the madness of men for wealth. Conflict with infidelity standing in solid squares, overawing recruits; and liberalists, spiking the guns, and worldliness poisoning the rations. Conflict with fashion and rum and the devil, with principalities and powers. Oh, that we may win glorious victories for Christianity this year. I believe we shall; we shall hear the songs of the new-born soul, we shall see the cross encircled by the arms of a new-born faith; we shall see Hell tremble as we crowd together in the contest; we shall listen to the shout of victory, as we forget self and everything but Christ. Oh, that upon the Conference may come the mighty baptism of power. Oh, that revivals may break out upon all our circuits and missions until the whole territory we occupy may glow with the light and life; and unto Him, the Lord of life, shall we ascribe honor and dominion and power and glory forever and ever. Amen.

BIBLE SOCIETY ADDRESS.

I COUNT myself happy to be permitted to stand upon this platform as an advocate of the claims of the Bible Society upon the sympathy and benevolence of Christian people. I am thankful to be in this way associated with these godly ministers and laymen whose prayers go up unceasingly for Zion's welfare and the spread of Christian knowledge and vital piety through the distribution of the Word of God. I am pleased to be at this anniversary in this enterprising city, and hear from the report and see from the congregation an interest in the cause that places this branch in the front rank of the branches of the General Society. And I esteem it above all a privilege to be permitted to say a word, however weak and imperfect it may be, on behalf of a Book to which we are indebted for civil liberty, spiritual good and national prosperity. I am not here in any representative capacity whatever, but I am sure the brethren of the Toronto auxiliary would wish me to convey to you their kindest greetings, and assure you that your success always gladdens them. As one of the directors of that auxiliary during the last twelve years, I can assure this congregation that every effort is made by Bible Societies to manage them with the greatest

possible economy consistent with efficiency, and that I know of no organization where more work is done with the same amount of money, so that every contributor may be satisfied that his donation is wisely expended.

If I understand the work of this Society, it is simply to aim at putting a copy of the sacred Scriptures in the hand of every man who will receive it—to give it to him for nothing if too poor to pay for it; and if able to pay, to sell it to him cheaper than he can get it anywhere else. And in addition it proposes, through its colporteurs, to visit and speak to the people about spiritual concerns, if they will listen. But believing that this Book is greater than the man, its great aim is to get the Book into the hands and homes of the masses. Its work has no complications, it knows no denominational distinctions, advocates no church peculiarities; it deals with the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the Word of the living God. Our hope of success is based upon the fact that the Book which we circulate is the Word of God. I am not ignorant of the fact that many dispute with us here, and affirm this Book to be the product of man. Well, the Book is here, somehow it got here, it had an origin, it has certainly lived a long time and it shows no signs of decay or death. Whatever its origin, and whatever its end, it has a wonderful vitality. It is so, whether it be written in the Hebrew or the Greek; languages dead or languages living; whether it be in the version of Wycliffe or Tyndale, of Edward VI. or James I. There are those who expected that when the Revised

Version of the New Testament came out, some fundamental doctrine, some important portion would be abstracted, that these eminent English and American scholars, after their ten years' labor, were sure to strip the old orthodoxy of some of its mysteries and terms, and give us a system of truth such as the rationalists and materialists of the present day would be more likely to accept. But the truth is, change the language of the Bible as you will, put it into the tongue of every nation upon the earth, apply it to all the tests of scholarly criticisms, and every time you will have left one and the same thing, that which has essential life and which no changes can destroy.

This, sir, I take it, is of some value in the history of this Book, a fact that stands alone, in ancient literature, that after centuries of changes, after copyings almost innumerable, after having been tossed about through ages of ignorance and tumult, there is not a single doctrine nor duty nor fact of any grade changed by the various readings. And to-day, also as in all the past, there is not a great Christian sect that does not hold as firmly to the most fundamental elements of Christianity as did the primitive age itself. God, a divine Christ, the immortality of men, their actual lost estate, their possible recovery by repentance and faith on their part, and by an atonement and Holy Ghost on the part of God. Nor is there a large denomination bearing Christ's name that does not lift up both hands in favor of these Christians first principles. They stand better than the rooted hills. Time, the great dissolver, makes no impression on

them. We confess to sore corruptions in certain quarters. Yet it is true that the Christian world as such, in its creeds and actual beliefs, maintains the whole gist of original Christianity. There is not a main timber in the great ship as it was launched which is not in it to-day, and as sound as ever. On parts barnacles have been allowed to gather. At times men have hindered the sailing by various outlandish equipments. At times they have made the vessel awfully ugly by ill-judged paint, and odious with unfit lading. But despite all this, it is the same ship, as to those great skeleton beams, whose heart of oak holds all together, that once ploughed the blue waves of Galilee and the Ægean, with the fishermen apostles for crew and Christ for captain.

Well, sir, I was speaking a moment ago of the fact that change of language does not change the Bible. But let me say, that the Bible always changes language for the better, while it remains unchanged. I suppose that in the works of Milton and Shakespeare, the tide of English language and thought rose to their highest point. But Milton and Shakespeare were never translated into any other language without suffering serious detriment. But you may take the book of Job, or the Psalms of David, or the Gospel and Epistles of the New Testament, and translation does not depreciate them. They lift the language up to their level. Every time they are translated into a new language they confer a benefit upon that language. It is said that Luther's translation of the Bible, renewed the life of the German tongue. So it is everywhere. Translate the

Scriptures into any language on the face of the earth, and that tongue pulsates with new life. It takes a new devotion and has new outlooks. But it is not the language of a nation only which the Bible affects, it affects the life of that nation. The Anglo-Saxon civilization is the highest civilization which ever blessed the world. This civilization comes from the Bible, and from no other source. Huxley says that "modern civilization rests on physical science." Take away her gifts to England, he adds, and her position among the leading nations of the world is gone to-morrow; for it is physical science that makes intelligence and moral energy stronger than brute force. But, sir, what has given England physical science? The Bible. What has given her moral energy? The Bible. Who founded her schools and universities? Men who revered the Bible. The facts of physical science have been the same since the world began. The electric light was in the garden of Eden. The locomotive lay on the banks of the Nile. But why is it that only those countries where the Bible has been read for centuries, where the Bible has given freedom of thought and freedom of institutions, where the Bible has taught man his native dignity, have applied these facts of physical science? Why did not the facts of physical science go to Mexico, or China, or Spain?

What is it, sir, that dignifies human life? What is it that makes a city full of men and women, a nobler gathering than the busy tenants of an ant-hill? The civilization of the ant rests upon the fact of physical science. The ant has industry. The ant has architec-

tural skill. Why are not a community of beavers, building their dams and plastering their dwellings, as noble a spectacle as a city full of men and women, building houses and ships and railways? What makes the civilization of modern times a possibility? Is it the great mechanical powers? Is it the great modern inventions? Take away the sense of accountability to man and God, take away the ties which bind a man to his wife, and children, and country, which make him anxious for a good name, and what will become of him? Which can we best afford to spare, steam power and electricity, chemistry and architecture, or that sense of God's presence and of stewardship to Him, which binds us to a moral government, of which He is the head? We have seen whole nations upon the islands of the sea transformed from barbarism to civilization by the Bible, as in a day. To-day the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands and Madagascar are like the demoniac in the Gospel. They dwell in the tombs of paganism, they deform and deface themselves with cruel rites, they are half-naked savages. To-morrow having felt the uplift which comes from this wonderful Book, they sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right minds. They build churches and school-houses. They elect rulers and print books. Where are the triumphs of physical science such as these? Where go the achievements of science, but where the Bible has gone before it. And these changes are not the result of any wholesale motive, they are the result of the study of this single Book. It would be a great loss to mankind

if all the great libraries in the world were burned up, if the accounts of the great modern inventions were consumed. But burn them all up; burn up all the implements and machines which the mind of man has ever invented, blot from the knowledge of men what they know of the triumphs of physical science, but leave men the Bible, and bring it into contact with the mind, and under its inspiration men will travel the old path over again, and win the same dominion over material things that they have already achieved. It would be a great loss to the human race if you should destroy all the treatises on constitutional government. But destroy them, and leave man the Bible, and he will write them over again. Just as the coral insect is building new continents, so the power of the Bible is lifting nation after nation into the light of the truth, clothing it with beauty and grace, making its institution as stable as the everlasting hills. Sir, this Book is from God. If not, why have the greatest intellects, such as Shakespeare, Milton and Newton, stood uncovered in its presence, and why haven't the hundred and one infidels who have rejected it on account of its supposed defects, given us at least one proverb such as Solomon's, one Psalm like those of David's, one poem like that of Job, one glimpse of a better world, like that given in the book of Revelation? If man made this Book, why don't man make another like it?

But, Mr. Chairman, while the Bible does all that we have been claiming for it, while it lies at the root of all national prosperity, and gives inspiration to the intellect and uplifts a people socially and commer-

cially, yet these are not the chief benefits it bestows, nor do these furnish the chief reason why we seek to circulate it. The chief work of the Bible is to deal with the great crushing question of human sin, and providing for its removal. It is no use to tell me what life ought to be, unless you make provision for dealing with life as it is. A doctor once said that the essence of all the rules of medicine might be summed up in the advice "To keep well." But go into the ward of the hospital and tell that to the patients, and will not bloodless lips say, "But what are we to do who are not well to begin with? Can you do nothing to make us well, in the hope that we may keep so afterwards?" It will be easy to prove the sinfulness of men from the Bible, but really, one does not need to go there to prove it. Read the newspaper, read the records of police and law courts. Look at the saloons and gambling hells, and houses that lead down to death; or turn from extreme cases to "society," and see the empty pride of place and power, envy and jealousy, selfishness and heartburning, all declaring that something is tremendously wrong. You may strip sin of its grossness, but it is sin still. The fact of sin meets us everywhere. How shall that fact be dealt with? Educate, say some; reduce the physical to the minimum and exalt the intellectual to the maximum, and you have virtue as the product. Sir, draw a full-length portrait of a Hottentot with all the hideousness of his immoral nature depicted in his countenance, with all the lasciviousness of his depraved being apparent in his physique; and I will go to Greece in the days of

Pericles, to Rome in the days of Cicero, to France in the days of Voltaire, to London or Edinburgh to-night; to New York, Chicago, or Toronto, and I will find a scholar whose intellect is impaired, whose mind is thoroughly cultured, yet who, in morals, is the counterpart of the Hottentot. Lord Bacon said, "In knowledge without love there is somewhat of malignity." "Art will restrain the passions and develop virtue," says another. But, sir, surely that man forgets that under the chisel of Phidias the Athenian marble breathed, and birds came and pecked at the grapes which Apelles painted on the canvas. Yet Grecian art could not renovate Grecian morals. From Monte Rosa to where Vesuvius sends up eternal incense to God, from where the Adriatic dashes on its ancient shore to where the Mediterranean kisses its native coast, Italy is one great art gallery; yet, from Lago Como to Vesuvius, Italy is corrupt with every form of vice. So, too, of Paris. Oh, art has failed! It may be a handmaid, but there is no power in the marble or the canvas to restrain the passions of man's degenerate nature.

Well, then, will civil government do it? Never. You may have a republic or a monarchy, an absolute or a paternal government, but from time immemorial to the present, all forms of civil government have been a failure in preventing crime and in developing virtue. Whether you go to the patriarchal government of Abraham, or to the absolute rule of the Czar of Russia, or to the aristocracy of England, or to the Republic of the United States or to your own land,

every form of civil government has failed to give mastery to virtue. There is nothing reformatory in penal law ; the design of punishment is not reformation. If it were, the devil would be the most reformed creature in the universe, and hell itself would be a paradise. When once a man has taken a downward step there is no power in law to restore him. Lastly, will family control do this work ? There are not a few of the advocates of the doctrine of Confucius who assert the idea of parental authority to change the heart and improve the life. But, my friends, this theory has been tried through two millenniums, tried upon a portion of the earth where citizens are numbered by hundreds of millions, and where square miles are counted by hundreds of thousands, and yet it has failed—failed in China. You who are parents are only so many witnesses of the inadequacy of parental government, independent of divine grace, either to restrain the passions of the young or to develop a virtuous life. But now comes in the Bible, and it tells us that God has done for man that which he never could do for himself. The very central thing in the whole Book, by the side of which everything is of secondary consequence, is this, “ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” He frees man from that penalty which law must carry against the sinner, if it is to be law at all. He makes us

safe—safe from condemnation—and sound as well as safe, for “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” This is the glory of the Gospel; it not only forgives the sin, but it lays the axe at the root of the tree and cuts it away. Yea, divine grace pulls it up root and branch and all. And so it is that your agents go forth with the living sanctifying Word of God—go to the toiling artizan in his shop, to the hard, rough lumberman in his shanty, to the poor emigrant landing on our shores, and offer him a Book whose doctrines received shall change him and give him peace, whose precepts observed shall build him up in all the traits of good character, whose promises believed shall comfort him in sorrow, and stand by him in bereavement, and comfort him in death.

Brethren, this is the Book that we seek to circulate. And to-night the appeal comes to you again for aid in scattering it broadcast over this fair field that God has given us to cultivate. The Dean of Canterbury once said on a missionary platform, “Contributions to the missionary cause are a fair index to the faith and spirituality of the man or the Church that makes them.” I think the Dean was right. To what extent do we believe in the Bible? What is the measure of our love for the souls that are perishing? How far have the principles of Christian charity penetrated into the heart? How fully are we possessed by the Spirit of the Master? The answer to these questions is not to be found simply in our prayers and in our psalmody, but in our practical giving of money to aid these great movements whose aim is the bringing of

men to Christ. How much owest thou my Lord? How far are you indebted to the Bible for your blessings? Home, with its many charms, the sanctuary with its elevating influences, education with its benefits, civil liberty with its priceless benefits, religious freedom with its advantages—these are yours, because of the Word of God that has come to you. How much, then, owest thou to this blessed Bible? Appeals come from every quarter. Patriotism calls with its trumpet tones; regard for a brother's welfare speaks with no uncertain voice; love for souls plies its weighty argument; the glory of God, with its increasing power, commands your active co-operation with this work. "Lo, the fields are white unto the harvest;" what a field to labor in. To all—age with its wisdom, and youth with its energy—comes the divine voice, "Go, work to-day in My vineyard." With your own heart right first of all, then take the seed-bag or the sickle, as God shall give directions.



THE HYMNS AND HYMN-WRITERS OF OUR NEW HYMN BOOK.

“HYMNS,” says a living writer, “are the exponents of the inward piety of the Church. They are the jewels which the Church has worn, the pearls, diamonds and precious stones formed into amulets more potent against sorrow and sadness than the most famous charms of wizard and magician.” Song is the expression of joy. A bird has lost its carol when there is no music of happiness in its heart; and a man really sings only when he is in good humor. Song has enlivened in every circumstance of trial and danger. Mahomet told his wife Ayesha to instruct his warriors in a native air of wild melody, and in its captive beauty they overwhelmed the enemies of the Moslem. There was no arm to stay their fury when its spirit buoyed them above a sense of danger. The legions of Napoleon were once imbedded in the snowy Alps. The atmosphere was cold and crisp, the wind howled, and far beyond and over still greater obstacles, lay sunny Italy. “Play the French Gloria,” shouted the indomitable leader to the band of the discouraged and fainting troops; and down the lines of that frozen cohort rushed warm liquid melody. The disheartened men were born anew, and the snow-clad Alps seemed small as mole-hills. The immortal

Lablache, on his death-bed, said to one of his children, "Go to the piano and accompany me." Broken down with anguish and sorrow at the anticipated death of his father, the youth obeyed. The rich, full tones of the great basso were now mellowed, but he sang with a celestial beauty, "Home, sweet home." He attempted the second stanza, but his throat had filled, and murmuring the cadenza of the last line he passed away. "A story is told," says Rev. W. M. Taylor, of New York, of "Faranelli, the famous singer, being sent for by express to Madrid, to try the effect of his magical voice on Philip V., of Spain, who was there buried in the profoundest melancholy, proof against every appeal to exertion, living without signs of life in a darkened chamber, the unresisting prey of dejection beyond relief. The vocalist was desired by the physician to sing in an outer room, which for a day or two he did, without any effect on the royal patient. But at length it was noticed that the king seemed partially roused from his stupor, and became an evident listener. Next day tears were seen starting from his eyes; the day after he ordered the door of his chamber to be left open, and at last the perturbed spirit entirely left him, and the medicinal voice of Faranelli effected what nothing else could do." How beautifully does Robert Browning sing of the effect of sweet sounds:

"My heart! they loose my heart, those simple words,
Its darkness passes, which naught else could touch;
Like some dank snake, that force may not expel,
Which glideth out to music sweet and low."

Southey, in his life of Wesley, refers to the fearless nature of the Moravians when in the very face of death. A deep impression was made on Wesley during his outward visit to America with these godly people, by the circumstance that during imminent peril from a storm at sea, they calmly continued their songs, with death, but not its fear, before their eyes. In the midst of the psalm with which they began their service, the sea broke over the ship, split the mainsail covered the vessel, and poured in between decks as if the great deep were about to swallow them up. A dreadful screaming was heard amongst the English colonists, but the Moravians calmly sung on. Wesley afterwards asked one of them if he was not afraid at the time. He replied, "I thank God, no!" He was then asked if the women and children were not afraid? "No," he said, "our women and children are never afraid to die." So, too, Jerome of Prague, bound naked to the stake, sang his hymns with untrembling voice—that "voice which was ever clear, sonorous, and with a certain dignity in its accents." The Christian hero could emulate the Pagan braves of whom Strabo tells us, "They pealed forth the pæan of victory from the cross to which Roman cruelty had nailed them." Mr. Jacox, author of Bible-music, says, "On the memorable night when the Church of St. Thomas was invested by the troops of Syrianus, the Archbishop Athanasius, seated on his throne, expected, with calm and intrepid dignity, the approach of death. While the public devotion was interrupted by shouts of rage and cries of terror, he animated his trembling congre-

gation to express their religious confidence by singing David's Psalms.

Alfred Tennyson, in "The Lady of Shalott," pictures the power of song in the last hour. As the boatman moved along, they on shore

" Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water side,
Singing in her song she died,
The lady of Shalott."

When the time was come for Bunyan's last band of pilgrims to cross the river, Mr. Despondency's daughter, Much-Afraid, went through the river singing, but none could understand what she said. And away across the river the good old Book says they sing a "new song." For as surely as the soul is immortal, and death has no dominion over it, and effects no solution of continuity in its existence, so surely, if the Christian creed be true and truly interpreted, the voice of praise shall renew its strength in other worlds than this:

" I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers ;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures."

To write a history of sacred song, would be to write a history of the Church. Ever since the morning stars sang together, music has exerted untold influence over all classes. Some poet speaks of the time

“ When the fawn and the spotted leopard,
The wolf and the young gazelle,
Came close to the sound of the singing,
As Eve’s voice rose and fell.”

In the days of David singing was well understood and much practised, as four thousand singers were appointed from among the Levites, having two hundred and eighty-eight leaders; and the whole duty of this immense choir was to furnish music for the temple service. Christ and His disciples sang together during their last interview before the crucifixion, and thus hymns were rendered sacred forever. The purity and fervor of primitive faith, the early persecutions, the profound stillness of the Middle Ages, and the great awakenings of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are all intimately connected with the history of hymnology. Prior to the Reformation hymns were comparatively scarce, but many of them were of a superlative character. The hymns of Ambrose, Anatolius, Prudentius, John of Damascus, and other early Latin and Greek writers, come to us to-day freighted with melody and thought and beauty, constituting one of the richest heritages of the Church. The oldest Christian hymn is found in Greek, in the books of Clement of Alexandria. It is difficult to realize its age. It takes us back over the Dark Ages, down to primitive days, to the immediate successors

of the apostles. Yea, it may have been sung by the "beloved disciple" before he ascended to his reward. The compilers of our hymn-book have wisely given it a place, and its sweet, tender accents will be sung, we doubt not, with an unction as divine as when it was heard in the love-feasts and at the baptisms of the early Christians:

" Shepherd of tender youth,
Guiding in love and truth,
Through devious ways ;
Christ, our triumphant King,
We come, Thy name to sing ;
Hither our children bring
To shout Thy praise."

There is a remarkable hymn, not in our book, composed seven hundred years after the death of Clement, by one Nutker, a Benedictine monk. He saw some workmen building the bridge of Martins-bruke, at the peril of their lives. The terrors of the spot and the exposure of the men suggested to Nutker the hymn, two verses of which are here given, and as we read them we can almost see the Alpine gorge, the frail scaffold, and the men with only a rope between them and eternity :

" In the midst of life, behold
Death has girt us round ;
Whom for help, then, shall we pray ?
Where shall grace be found.

"In the midst of death, the jaws
Of hell against us gape;
Who from peril dire as this
Openeth us escape?"

It is said that the great Robert Hall once prepared a sermon on the familiar words "In the midst of life we are in death," and after finishing the discourse looked through the Bible to find it, but looked in vain. The words are first found in Nutker's hymn, and have been embodied in the solemn burial service, and will probably continue thus in use until the coming of our Lord.

But the greatest hymn of mediæval times is the "Dies Iræ,"* "the day of wrath," which has come down to us enriched with the associations of centuries. Its reputed author is Thomas Von Celane, a Franciscan monk of the thirteenth century, to whom it was suggested by Zephaniah's prophecy, "that day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness." Dean Stanley has made a fine translation of this old hymn, which he has allowed to be inserted in our book. (No. 882.)

Passing on, we come to the hymns of the Germans, particularly those used by the Bohemian brethren, the oldest hymns in the German tongue. In these we have none of the stately grandeur of the old Latins, but the simple breathing of the soul after God. One

* The tone of this hymn is a reflex of the theology of the time, austere and severe, rather than living and hopeful. It forms a part of the burial service in the Roman Missal, and is chanted in magnificent style at the great Sistine Chapel at Rome. Dr. Johnson and Walter Scott said they could never recite it without tears, and Mozart, when he made it the basis of his "Requiem," became so intensely excited by the theme as to hasten his death.

of them, a "Hymn to the Trinity," is a fine expression of the soul's wants.

These old Bohemian hymns had little artistic finish, but they were endeared to the people by the holiest memories. They told the children tales of martyrdom; the aged spoke them with reverence; martyrs sang them in the flames, and they trembled on the lips of dying soldiers in the gory field. Thus in the same age that witnessed obscene games and plays in the churches of Paris, angels stooped down to hear the rugged ballads in which the Hussites chanted their faith—the genuine hallelujahs that were carried to heaven from lone Bohemian hamlets and still forests, from churches and from loathsome dungeons.

But the man who, more than any other, gave life and power to German hymnody, is first brought to our notice by this circumstance. On a cold, dark night, Conrad, a worthy German, sat in his home playing his flute, while Ursula, his wife, was preparing supper. They heard a sweet voice singing outside, and this was the song :

" Lord of heaven, lone and sad,
I would lift my soul to Thee ;
Pilgrim in a foreign land,
Glorious Father, look on me ;
I shall neither faint nor die
While I walk beneath Thine eye.

" I will stay my faith on Thee,
And will never fear to tread
Where the Saviour-Master leads,
He will give me daily bread ;

Christ was hungry, Christ was poor,
He will feed me from His store.

“Foxes to their holes have gone,
Every bird into its nest ;
But I wander here alone,
And for me there is no rest ;
Yet I neither faint nor fear,
For the Saviour, Christ, is near.

“If I live, He'll be near me ;
If I die, to Him I'll go ;
He'll not leave me, I will trust Him,
And my heart no fear shall know ;
Sin and sorrow I defy,
For on Jesus I rely.”

“I think that is the voice of a child,” said Ursula ;
“let us open the door and see.” Conrad opened the
door and saw a ragged child, who said :

“Charity, sir, for Christ's sake.”

“Come in, my little one,” said he ; “you shall rest
with me for the night.” The boy said “Thank God,”
and entered. The heat of the room made him faint,
but Ursula's care soon restored him. They gave him
supper, and then he told them that he was the son of
a poor miner, and wanted to be a priest. His kind
friends sent him to bed, and when he was asleep they
looked in upon him, and were so pleased with his
countenance that they determined to keep him if he
was willing, for they had lost their own little boy not
long before. In the morning they found that he was
only too glad to remain. They sent him to school, and
he entered a monastery, found a Bible, and in time

became Dr. Martin Luther, the champion of the Reformation. Luther knew the worth of hymns; he called them "miniature Bibles." He wrote thirty-seven, "which are to be weighed, not counted." So great was the influence of his songs and chorals that one of Rome's cardinals said, "By his songs he has conquered us." During the time when he was most busy composing his hymns, four printers in Erfurt alone were kept at work in printing and publishing them. They seemed to fly all over the land as if on the wings of the wind. The 506th hymn in our Book is a translation by Hedge of one of Luther's most celebrated hymns.* In the town of Cobourg, in Germany, is an old castle that rises five hundred feet above the surrounding town. The chief attractions to visitors now are the rooms and the bed which Luther occupied, and the pulpit from which he preached three and a half centuries ago. The time of his sojourn here was in 1550—during the meeting of the Diet of Augsburg, where the great confession of the Protestant Church was delivered. While Melancthon and other theologians, together with the Elector, went to the Diet, they left Luther on the way in the refuge afforded by the castle, where he could easily be reached by letter, and it is said that during the Diet, when great dangers threatened the Church he would daily go to the window of the castle, look

* It was written on the occasion of the evangelical princes delivering that *Protest* at the Second Diet of Spires in 1529, from which we Protestants derive the name. It was a source of great comfort to the intrepid reformer.

up toward heaven, and sing with great energy this grand hymn of faith, our 506th.

This hymn may well be associated with castles. It seems itself a tower of strength. It is founded on the 46th Psalm, which opens with the words of power, "God is our refuge and strength."

After the Reformation the "old version of the Psalms" was produced by Sternhold and Hopkins. Thomas Fuller said of the rhythm of this, that "any blacksmith with two hammers and an anvil could make better music." To illustrate: the Psalmist says, "O God, how long shall the enemy reproach? Why withdrawest Thy hand? Pluck it out of Thy bosom." This the poet renders:

"Why dost withdraw Thy hand aback,
And hide it in Thy lap?
O pluck it out, and be not slow
To give Thy foes a rap."

Tate and Brady's "new version" came out soon after Sternhold's, of which Arch leacon Hare said, "It had extraordinary talent for sifting the life and power of David's Psalms."

After this poets became very numerous, and all classes from kings to cobblers tried their hand at hymn-writing. Of the most of these it might be said, as it was of Sir R. Blackmore:

"He took his muse at once and dipt her
Full in the middle of the Scriptor;
What wonders then the strange old man did,
Sternhold himself was out-Sternhold-ed."

The fact is, at this time the art of hymn-making had embalmed itself—a revival of the art was necessary, and the genuine revival was largely identical with the rise of Methodism. Even Dr. Watts, who has been called the father and inventor of English hymns, and who certainly composed some of our sweetest and best lyrics, had defects that unfitted him for fully meeting the wants of the Church in this respect. One of these arose from the fact that he was no musician; and therefore there is a lack of variety of metre—nearly all his hymns being either common, long or short metre—presenting a strong contrast to Charles Wesley, who was a skilled musician and had a wonderfully delicate ear, and whose variety of metre is surprising. And then Watts in comparatively few of his hymns sustains throughout strength of thought. Some of his finest productions are marred by a stanza weak in figure and harmony, while there were many instances of positively bad taste. Thus his hymn,

“ Let me hear my Saviour say,
Strength shall be equal to thy day,”

closed with this ludicrous jingle:

“ So Samson, when his hair was lost,
Met the Philistines to his cost,
Shook his vain limbs with sad surprise,
Made feeble fight, and lost his eyes.”

I repeat it, a revival of hymnology was necessary, and that revival dates from the time of John and Charles Wesley.

But it is time to come to the immediate notice of our new hymn-book. The reason for this new collection for use in our Church, and the delicate and important work of the Committee that made it, is fitly told in the Preface to the Book.

In noticing the book, my purpose simply is to give short biographical notes of some of the authors of the hymns, to give the circumstances in which certain of the more popular hymns were written, together with anecdotal illustrations of the effects produced by their use, and to close with a brief survey of the book as a whole. In carrying out this outline I must of course begin with

CHARLES WESLEY,

The poet of Methodism, and taken all in all, the finest uninspired hymnist that has ever been given by Providence to the Church. Of the nine hundred and thirty-five hymns in this book, five hundred and thirty-one are from Charles Wesley's pen, and these are not a tithe of the hymns he wrote. "It may be affirmed," says Isaac Taylor, "that there is no principal element of Christianity ; no main article of belief as professed by Protestant Churches ; that there is no moral or ethical sentiment peculiarly characteristic of the Gospel ; no height or depth of feeling proper to the spiritual life, that does not find itself emphatically and pointedly and clearly expressed in some stanza of Charles Wesley's hymns." As we have already hinted, one is struck with the amazing variety of subject, illustration and metre in his hymns. Now he walks

among the works of God on earth, and sings his bounty and goodness, and now he sweeps through the heavens amidst shining worlds and revolving spheres, and anon he enters heaven itself and, prostrate before God and the Lamb, sings the wonders of redemption with the glorified multitude there. So that, whether the Christian desires to pour out his sorrow or sing out his joy, whether his mind may be shrouded in gloom or looking out in sunshine, whether on the Mount of Transfiguration or in the valley of humiliation, whether celebrating nuptials or mourning the dead, he finds fit language to express himself in Charles Wesley's hymns. The variety of metre in his hymns shows with what wonderful aptness he could express the varied feelings of the soul. These hymns march at times like lengthened processions in solemn grandeur; they sweep at other times like chariots of fire through the heavens, or they are broken like sobs of grief at the grave's mouth, or play like the joyful affections of childhood at the hearth, or shout like victors in the fray of the battle-field. Sometimes he makes you tremble as he sings of the awful scenes of the judgment day. You hear the last trumpet as its shrill notes reach the bottom of the sea and stir up the dead there, or ring into the gloomy depths of the grave and awaken the slumbers of its inhabitants.

“ The great archangel's trump shall sound,
While twice ten thousand thunders roar,
Tear up the graves and cleave the ground,
And make the greedy sea restore.”

And then how he brings you up to heaven to behold the Lord Jesus, who has entered the "Holy Place," there to make intercessor for us.

With the true spirit of a poet he presses everything into the service of his sacred muse. The earth in its grandeur and beauty, the sea in its vastness and fulness, the heavens with their shining wonders, the elements in quietude and commotion, all were taken hold of by his genius and worked into his beautiful compositions. Now he sweeps the harp of David and awakens its holy harmonies, and now he plays on the lute of Orpheus till the dream of Virgil becomes a reality. The story told of Orpheus is that when he played on his lute the stones rose from the quarry and danced till they arranged themselves in the building, and likewise the timbers from the forest came together to their proper places in the roof, till the whole building stood in its completeness a monument of the power of the lute.

The first hymn in our book, and, indeed, in all Methodist hymn books,

"O for a thousand tongues to sing,"

was originally entitled, "For the anniversary day of one's conversion." At the time of Charles Wesley's conversion, May 21st, 1738, he was confined by a severe attack of pleurisy to his room in the house of a Mr. Bray, in London. Mrs. Turner, a good Moravian woman, sister to Mr. Bray, was stopping in the same house. After a night of agony, he awoke and cried aloud, "O Jesus, Thou hast said, I will come unto you ;

Thou hast said, I will send the Comforter unto you ;
 Thou hast said, My Father and I will come unto you
 and will make our abode with you. Thou art God, Thou
 canst not lie. I wholly rely upon Thy promise." As
 Mrs. Turner heard these cries, she was constrained to
 say, through the slightly opened door, "In the name
 of Jesus of Nazareth arise and believe, and thou shalt
 be healed of all thine infirmities." It was a word
 fitly spoken. Said he, "Oh that Christ would but
 thus speak to me!" and then he added, "I believe! I
 believe!" The victory was won. Charles Wesley
 was converted. On the first anniversary of this event
 this hymn was written. When Charles consulted
 Peter Böhler about praising Christ, Böhler replied,
 "Had I a thousand tongues, I would praise Him with
 them all." This utterance of the pious Moravian is
 enshrined in this glorious hymn, whose soul-stirring
 music shall go down the line of the ages, till it mingles
 with the music of the perfected Church in heaven.
 Standing at the very portal of this temple of melody,
 it fitly voices the song and sentiment of the ever-
 multiplying hosts who chant their praises to the glory
 of Him who redeemed them with His own precious
 blood.

"Jesus, the name that charms our fears,
 That bids our sorrows cease."

Dr. Theodore Cuyler says, "John Wesley was
system, Charles was *song*. John was the Bezaleel who
 laid the foundations and hewed out the pillars of the
 new tabernacle ; but Charles was the Asaph who filled

it with melody. Methodism was builded rapidly, but the walls never would have gone up so fast had they not been built to *music*." One immortal hymn has gone far to justify Dr. Cuyler's words. If Charles Wesley had written it only, his name would have been cut on the arch of fame far above most others. I refer to that tender metrical prayer,

"Jesus, lover of my soul."

Many who are perfectly familiar with it know not the circumstances in which it was born.

Charles and John Wesley and Richard Pilmore were holding one of their twilight meetings on the common, when the mob assailed them and they were compelled to fly for their lives. They succeeded in getting beyond a hedge-row, where they prostrated themselves on the ground, and placed their hands on their heads as a protection from the stones which still came so near that they could feel the current of air made by the missiles as they went whizzing past them. In the night shades that were gathering, they managed to hide from the fury of the rabble in a tenantless spring-house. Here they struck a light with a flint-stone, and after dusting their clothes and washing their faces, they refreshed themselves with the cooling water from a stream near by. Charles Wesley pulled out a lead pencil, made by hammering to a point a piece of lead, and from the inspiration of these surroundings composed the precious hymn.

Some years ago a small steamer plying along the coast sprang a leak. There were only three passen-

gers on board—a gentleman and two ladies—sisters. At dusk they were alarmed by the sudden stopping of the boat. Rushing to the deck they were astonished to see the captain and the crew in the only small boat on board, pulling for the land, about a mile distant. "Stop, stop, for heaven's sake, and save us too." "No!" said the captain, "the boat will hold no more; some one will have to be lost." The gentleman saw that in a few minutes the vessel would go down, and finding a small hatch, which was easily detached, he threw it into the water and embarked upon it. Looking back he saw the two brave sisters standing on deck with their arms around each other, singing,

"Jesus, lover of my soul,"

and just as they were about finishing the verse,

"Other refuge have I none,"

they sank to rise no more.

Great interest attaches to the 223rd hymn, but that interest is well nigh lost by the pruning knife of the compilers.

Charles Wesley was converted on the 21st day of May, 1738. Two days after, he writes in his journal, "At nine I began a hymn on my conversion, but was persuaded to break off for fear of pride. Mr. Bray coming in encouraged me to proceed, in spite of Satan. I prayed Christ to stand by me, and finished the hymn. Upon my afterwards showing it to Mr. Bray, the devil threw in a fiery dart, suggesting it was wrong, and that I had displeased God. I saw, how-

ever, it was a device of the enemy to keep back glory from God. It is not unusual with him to preach humility, when speaking will endanger his kingdom or do honor to Christ. God has shown me He can defend me from pride while speaking for Him." This extract from the journal agrees with the spirit of the hymn, as it is in the old book. The two verses that have been left out, I have often found to be of great use in urging young converts to witness for Christ.

Two days after this hymn was written, John Wesley was converted, and Charles says, speaking of himself and John, and Mr. Bray and others, "We sang the hymn with great joy and parted with prayer." In the last verse of the hymn, however, our compilers have wisely altered the line, "Languished for you the *eternal* God," as it reads in the old book, to "Languished for you the *incarnate* God." In several hymns expressions occur like the above, or such as "the *immortal* God hath died;" in some other hymns, terms such as "*dear*," etc., are applied to God and Christ; and all of these are wisely expunged, or more befitting and reverent terms are used. I am glad also that hymns such as the 24th and 25th in the old book, made up of minute descriptions of the physical sufferings of Christ, are left out. The suffering of the Saviour was too deep, and the whole of the scenes of Calvary are too awful, to be made the subject of scenic description. How briefly and how tenderly the sacred writers describe the agony of the garden and the cross. Solemn awe checks multiplicity of words and restrains the flights of imagination. In this respect the new is far beyond the old book.

Few hymns are more in use amongst us than the 119th :

“Let earth and heaven agree.”

Sung to the old tune, “Lennox,” and none fits it so well as that, it has rendered signal service at protracted and camp-meetings, as well as the ordinary services of the sanctuary. Eternity alone will reveal how many poor souls, “stung by the scorpion sin,” have drank in the balmy sound of Jesus’ love, and been “at once made whole.” Some time since I heard the Hon. Vice-Chancellor Blake say at a meeting in Shaftesbury Hall, Toronto, that the day he visited the Zoological Gardens, in London, a man entered the place where the serpents are kept, and, with the air of a bravado, sought to do with them what their keepers often do. He took one after another of the venomous snakes and wound them round his neck, put them under his waistcoat, swung them round and round his head. At length he took one of the smallest, but most venomous, whose bite is almost instant death, held it by the neck, put its head almost up to his forehead, and looked it straight in the eyes, when in an instant the little red fang made a small puncture in his face, and a single drop of blood exuded. The keeper, knowing the danger, hurried him into a cab and bore him to an hospital, but no human power could save him, and in a short time he died in agony.

One of the most impressive hymns that Charles Wesley wrote is the 875th :

“And am I only born to die ?”

An affecting incident will illustrate its power :

The daughter of an English nobleman became a devoted Christian. She was the idol of her father, but instead of rejoicing over the change in her conversation and conduct, he regretted it. He placed at her disposal large sums of money, and by threats, temptations to extravagance in dress, and by travelling in foreign countries—yea, by every means in his power—he tried to divert her mind from religion. But her heart was fixed. At last he resolved on one more desperate attempt. A large company of the nobility were invited to his house. The drawing-room was crowded. It was arranged that all the young ladies present should sing a worldly song, and he determined, and let his daughter know, that if she refused, so far as property was concerned, she should be ruined. She felt that if she complied she would grieve away the Holy Spirit, and yet if she refused she would lose caste and be disgraced in society. Dreadful was the moment. She awaited the arrival of her turn to occupy the piano and sing. At last her name was called. For a moment all were in silent suspense to see how she would act. Without hesitation she arose and went to the instrument. She spent a moment in silent prayer, and then with a sweetness almost supernatural she sang through the hymn :

“ And am I only born to die ?
And must I suddenly comply ?
With nature’s stern decree ? ”

The minstrel ceased. The solemnity of eternity

overshadowed the assembly. They dispersed in silence. The father wept aloud. He sought the instructions and prayers of his child. His soul was saved; and, after uniting with the Church, he contributed to benevolent purposes over half a million of dollars.

Equally striking is an illustration of the influence of the 243rd hymn, one of the tenderest and most plaintive in the book. An actress, in an English town, whilst passing along the street, had her attention arrested by singing in a cottage. Curiosity prompted her to look in at the open door, when she saw a few poor people, one of whom was giving out the hymn,

“Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?”

The tune was sweet and simple, but she heeded it not. The words had riveted her attention, and she stood motionless until she was invited to enter. She quitted the cottage, but the words of the hymn followed her, and she resolved to procure a copy of the book containing it. She read and re-read the hymn, attended the ministry of the Gospel, and was converted. She resolved to leave the stage. The manager tried to overcome her scruples by ridicule, then by the loss he would incur, and then, as the last thing, he requested her to appear once more in a piece in which she was very popular. She consented, and in the evening appeared at the theatre. The play required her first to sing a song, and when the curtain was drawn up

the orchestra began the accompaniment. But she stood as if lost in thought. The music ceased, and, supposing her to be embarrassed, the band commenced again. A second time they paused for her to begin, and still she did not open her lips. A third time the air was played, and then, with clasped hands and eyes suffused with tears, she sang :

“Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me ?
Can my God His wrath forbear,
Me, the chief of sinners, spare ?”

The performance suddenly ceased. Some ridiculed, but others were led to consider their ways and cry for mercy. She lived a consistent life, and at length became the wife of a minister.

At Portland, a peninsular section of England, noted for its stone quarries, Charles Wesley commenced a series of meetings for the benefit of the poor quarrymen. With the sound of stone breaking all around him, and in his mind Jeremiah's comparison of “the word . . . like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces,” he penned the well-known hymn, the 86th :

“Come, O thou all victorious Lord.”

A universal favorite is hymn 109 :

“Jesus, the name high over all.”

Having been preaching in a small church in Cornwall, and condemning the drunken revels of the people, a man in the congregation contradicted him

and blasphemed the name of Christ. Charles asked, "Who is he that pleads for the devil?" The reviler stood boldly forward; the preacher fearlessly exposed his iniquity, and showed the whole congregation their state by nature. Wesley's withering exposure drove the man in disgrace from the church. These circumstances gave rise to the hymn which has been sung by the living and the dying ever since, and has been greatly blessed of God in the conversion of souls.

John Wesley regarded the hymn commencing

"How happy every child of grace,"

as one of Charles' finest and best compositions. Married to the grand old tune "Coronation," it has rung through the years, and will ring while there are happy hearts on earth to sing it.

The Rev. Wm. Arthur, speaking of the death-bed of Samuel Budgett, the "successful merchant," says, "After the sacramental elements had been administered to him he asked for a hymn to be sung. His friends feared the effort would be too much for him, but he said, 'Sing, sing.' One present then gave out, 'Behold the Saviour of mankind.' He appeared quite in an ecstasy as they sang. After a short pause he said again, 'Sing,' and they sang

'How happy every child of grace.'

He joined heartily in that song of triumph. Shortly afterwards he tried to repeat another hymn, 'With glorious clouds encompassed round,' but his work was done, and his happy spirit passed away to the skies."

Whose heart has not been thrilled by the singing of the companion hymn to the above :

“ Come, let us join our friends above,
That have obtained the prize.”

A vast multitude followed to the grave a faithful servant of God. The benediction had scarcely closed the funeral service before they lifted up a mighty voice and sang in thrilling tones :

“ Come, let us join our friends above.”

Among the singers was one young man, who seemed to be wrapt into ecstasy while he sung. Soon after he was found on his death-bed. To a friend, who had seen him at the grave, he said, “ I am going, I am going early, but God has brightened my short life into a full one. Oh, those hymns. They have taught me to live in the light of the future. They have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. O sir, do you remember the singing at the funeral ? ” “ Yes,” it was replied, “ and some thought then that you would never sing again.” “ Never sing again, sir ! Why I shall sing forever. Oh, that glorious hymn ! let us sing it now,” and he began a verse of “ Come let us join,” etc. :—

“ Oh, that we now might grasp our Guide !
Oh, that the word were given !
Come, Lord of Hosts, the waves divide,
And land us—land ME in——”

Heaven,” he would have sung—but he was gone. He had joined the heavenly choir.

The name of Charles Wesley can scarcely be mentioned without a thought about one hymn in which his hallowed genius rises even above itself. Dr. Watts said: "Charles Wesley's 'Wrestling Jacob' is worth all the verses I ever wrote." The Rev. John Kirk says: "The dramatic form, so singular in hymnic composition, shadowing forth the action of the conversation; the great force of its thoroughly English expression; the complete finish and rhythm of its verse; its straightforward ease without any mere straining at elegance, and the minuteness and general beauty of its application of the narrative, have won the commendation of all competent critics." Charles often preached upon the subject of the hymn. One would like to have heard the sermon, and at its close to have heard him give out in his own impressive way:—

"Come, O thou traveller unknown."

The saintly poet had at length his own wrestling. He left his brother John to give out the favorite hymn, and thousands whom he had taught to wrestle remained behind to sing of Israel's victory. Shortly after his entrance into rest John was at Bolton. The venerable man, eighty-five years of age, commenced the service in the usual way, with singing and prayer. For the second hymn he selected, "Wrestling Jacob," and gave out the first verse with peculiar emphasis. When he came to the words.

"My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee."

his emotion became uncontrollable. He burst into a

flood of tears, sat down in the pulpit, and covered his face with his hands. The people ceased to sing, sat down, and sobbed aloud.

A fine spiritual hymn written by Charles Wesley is the 474th. It is No. 256 in the old book, and deserves to be classed with Luther's immortal "Fortress" hymn. This hymn I have never heard sung in any of our congregations. It was born in the midst of trouble, and is a fine song of gratitude for "deliverance in a tumult." Just to what tumult it refers it is impossible to say, for it fell to the lot of the Wesleys to be in "tumults often." But the God who delivered the young Hebrew heroes from the fire, and Daniel from the lions, and Paul from hosts at Ephesus, defended them. We can imagine how the early Methodists would sing, after a tumult, this song of triumph :

"Thine arm hath safely brought us
A way no more expected,
Than when Thy sheep passed through the deep,
By crystal walls protected."

Never shall I forget with what unction and holy joy an old believer in Montreal, once an important officer in the East India Company, a man of strong intellect and vigorous piety, repeated a few hours before his death, the second verse of the 132nd hymn :

"Thy mighty name salvation is,
And keeps my happy soul above ;
Comfort it brings, and power, and peace,
And joy, and everlasting love.
To me with Thy dear name are given
Pardon and holiness and heaven."

The last two lines of this hymn,

"In grief my joy unspeakable,
My life in death, my *heaven in hell.*"

have been wisely changed to read:

"My joy in grief, my shield in strife,
In death my everlasting life."

How beautifully does this hymn express Christ's relation to the believer, by using striking antitheses—his life in death, shield in strife, joy in grief, light in darkness, liberty in bondage, power in weakness, supply in want, glory in shame, smile in frowns, gain in loss, peace in war, medicine in sickness, ease in pain, rest in toil—in a word, Christ is to him "ALL IN ALL."

An undying interest attaches to the 317th hymn,

"Let the world their virtue boast,"

from the use which John Wesley made of it on his death-bed. He preached his last sermon at Leatherhead, February 23rd, 1791; on the 25th, he returned to his own house, at City Road, London. On the 26th he was very feeble; on the 27th, was so much exhausted that he said, "Speak to me, I cannot speak." In the afternoon, feeling his end drawing near, he said, "There is no need for more than what I said at Bristol. My words then were:

" 'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.' "

Soon after he said, "He is all! He is all!" In the evening he got up, and while sitting in his chair, he said, "How necessary it is for every one to be on the right foundation.

" 'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'

We must be justified by faith and go on to sanctification." On Tuesday, March 1st, he tried to sing part of two hymns. He also tried, but in vain, to write the memorable words which he could only speak, "God is with us," and afterwards, "The best of all is, God is with us." After a while he said, "I'll praise! I'll praise!" These were the last words he uttered, excepting that, shortly before he died, on Wednesday morning, March 2nd, a few minutes before 10 o'clock, he said to Mr. Bradford, a faithful friend, "Farewell."

The Hymn-book Committee have rendered signal service to our Church by the changes they have made in Charles Wesley's hymns on the Lord's supper. Ritualists have claimed him as belonging to their school, and to establish their claim have reproduced some of his hymns on the sacrament of the Lord's supper. These hymns, however, were written at an early period of his life, when he was "a legal Christian without Christ, a Ritualist without spiritual life, living in the letter only of the law, not having known the Spirit which giveth life. The Rev. Dr. Rigg, in a very able article, has shown that the teaching, preaching and poetry of both John and Charles Wesley were thoroughly Presbyterian, evangelical and spiritual,

from 1745 to the end of their lives." Our compilers have made a fine sacramental hymn by expunging very objectionable verses from hymns 546 and 753 of the old book, and putting the remaining verses together in hymn No. 695. Other hymns upon this subject have also been pruned of fruitless branches. It is hoped that some one may render a like service for portions of our liturgy, particularly the baptismal service, which is full of needless figures and heterodox teaching.

Charles Wesley died March 29th, 1788. Always delicate, yet he lived to be seventy-nine years and three months old. Mr. Bardsley, one of the London preachers, says: "He had no disorder but old age. He had very little pain. His mind was calm as a summer's evening. Some months before his departure he said he should die in March, and so he did." Shortly before his death he dictated to his wife the lines:

"In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a sinful worm redeem;
Jesus, my only hope Thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
O could I catch a smile from Thee,
And drop into eternity."

His last words were, "Lord—my heart—MY God." John Wesley writes: "My brother fell asleep so quietly that they who sat by him did not know when he died."

JOHN WESLEY.

In the new hymn-book there are fourteen hymns translated by John Wesley from the French and Ger-

man, and seven of his original hymns. Nos. 72, 207, 269, 392 and 611 are original, as marked in the index. With respect, however, to No. 72, it is but a part of a hymn, the commencement of which is No. 71 and its close No. 73. These two are, by the index, attributed to Charles Wesley, but Stevenson, in his "Hymn-book and Its Associations," gives them to John, and the internal evidence of the hymns themselves accords with this statement. The three hymns constitute the most exhaustive and superb paraphrase of the Lord's prayer in any language. They are admirable specimens of Wesley's style, clear analysis, freedom from all redundancy of expression, exact terminology, and deep scriptural and devotional spirit. Hymn 611,

" No foot of land do I possess,"

originally contained nine verses; in the old book it has eight, in the new it is wisely cut down to five. It was composed about five years before the author's unfortunate marriage, and indicates views and feelings upon that question which *he*, at all events, would have done well to have retained. Three days after his marriage he says, "I met the single men of the society and advised them to remain so." The three verses commencing:

" I have no sharer of my heart,"

" I have no babes to hold me here,"

and

" No foot of land do I possess,"

are omitted from our book. No one will mourn the loss of them. It is said that a Methodist preacher in

the United States had a friend who gave him the title deed of a farm. One day he came to him, and said, "I want to give you back that deed." "What's the matter; any flaw in it?" "No." "Why don't you keep it, then?" "Well," said he, "I have not been able to sing, ever since I got it, a very favorite hymn, a part of which runs this way :

" ' No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in the wilderness ;
A poor wayfaring man,'

and I would rather sing that hymn than own America."

If that man had a family it would have been well for them if he had kept the farm even at the expense of the loss of the hymn.

John Wesley was peculiarly happy in his translations from the German. One of these, constituting Nos. 494 and 495 :

" Commit thou all thy griefs,"
and
" Give to the winds thy fears,"

is from Paul Gerhardt, who was born in Saxony, in 1606.

Hymns 130 and 131 are translations from the works of Count Zinzendorf. In the first line of No. 130 it reads in the old book, "I *thirst*, thou wounded," etc. The word seems wholly at variance with the thought and figure that follow,—"*Thirsting*" to be washed and to rest. Possibly it would have been as well to have omitted the first verse altogether, as

almost always we begin with the second, and the idea of "*dwelling*" in the "wounds" of Christ is a harsh expression of desire for Him. As it is, the compilers have substituted "*I come*" for "*I thirst*." No. 131,

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness,"

though savoring somewhat of a Calvinistic form of expression, is an exceedingly fine and popular hymn.

Zinzendorf was born at Dresden, in 1700. He is said to have been converted while looking at a picture of the Crucifixion, beneath which was the inscription, "All this for thee, how much for Me?" He is described as "a noble, grand-looking man, with high forehead and blue eyes, manly in his bearing and above medium height in stature." He was for many years a most attached friend of the Wesleys, and one of the most useful of men in promoting religion in England and Germany, though sometimes there was in his teaching an admixture of dangerous error. He died in 1760. His coffin was borne to the tomb by thirty-two preachers and missionaries of the Moravian Church, to which he belonged. They had come from England, Ireland, Holland, Germany, Greenland and America. The funeral procession was composed of over two thousand Christian people. Was ever monarch honored by such a funeral?

A friend of Zinzendorf's, John Andrew Rothe, pastor of the Moravian church, at Hainault, is the author of that familiar hymn,

"Now I have found the ground wherein."

Perhaps there is not in our whole collection a hymn which is so full of Scripture truths expressed in Scripture phraseology. A gentleman who compared it with the Word of God found no less than thirty-six distinct references to passages of Scripture. The last two lines,

“ While Jesus’ blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries,”

were almost the last words uttered by John Fletcher, whose faith in the truths they contain was so strong that his feeble voice re-echoed with surprising energy the words, “ Boundless, boundless mercy ! ”

The Rev. John Haigh fell asleep in Jesus, with these lines trembling on his lips,

“ Mercy’s full power I then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.”

ISAAC WATTS.

We have seventy-one of Dr. Watts’ hymns in our book. He was born in Southampton, England, July 17th, 1674. His precocious intellect soon began to show itself. Before he could speak plainly, when money was given him, he would say, “ A book ! a book ! buy a book ! ” In his fourth year he began to study Latin, in his ninth Greek, in his tenth French, and in his thirteenth Hebrew. He was born a poet. Like Pope “ he lisped in numbers and the numbers came.” He was a very small man ; only five feet in height, and of a slender frame. In a hotel he heard one man say to another, “ What ! is that the great Dr.

Watts?" Watts turned to the critic, and uttered these well known lines:

" Were I so tall to reach the pole,
Or grasp the ocean with a span ;
I must be measured by my soul,
The mind's the standard of the man."

Watts lived and died unmarried. It was not his own fault, however, for he once proposed but was rejected; the lady giving as a reason, " However much I admire the jewel, I cannot admire the casket that contains it." When quite a young man he attended church where the hymnody and singing were execrable. Giving vent to his feelings, the reply was, " Give us something better, young man." He complied, and that evening the church was invited to close its service with a new hymn, beginning,

" Behold the glories of the Lamb."

That was the first of the long list of hymns that has wreathed the name of Watts with glory.

Some of his hymns are amongst the best known and most popular of our collection.

Who has not sung,

" There is a land of pure delight,"

written while the poet sat at a parlor window which overlooked the River Itchen, and in full view of the Isle of Wight, whose bewitching landscapes have inspired the genius of many a poet? The waters

before him were an apt image of the "narrow sea" which divides "the heavenly land from ours," and the deep green of the enchanting island beyond, which must be seen to be appreciated, gave him the verse which has been present to the mind of many a pilgrim as his feet touched the waters of Jordan.

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green ;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between."

Who has not had a vision of the saved, as in Isaac Watts' words he has sung,

"Give me the wings of faith to rise," etc.

What a glimpse of Calvary has been obtained as with him we have

"Surveyed the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died."

And how many thousands of God's redeemed ones have

"Marched through Immanuel's ground"

to the music of

"Come, ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known."

Amongst the many hymnic renderings of the 51st Psalm, none excels Isaac Watts' in the 259th hymn, commencing,

"Show pity, Lord ; O Lord, forgive."

In it deep penitence, hope in God's mercy, and earnest prayer and consecration are tenderly blended. It would seem almost impossible for a man to thoughtfully read that hymn through without bowing down his heart in contrition before God.

Our compilers have done well in giving a place to that long-time favorite with both old and young,

"When I can read my title clear."

A Christian officer in the American war lay all night on the battle-field, wounded in both thighs. Said he, "The stars shone clear over the dark battle-field, and I began to think about that God who was above those glorious worlds. I felt that I ought to praise Him, even while wounded on that field. I sang that beautiful hymn,

" 'When I can read my title clear.' "

There was a Christian brother in the bush near me. I could not see him, but I could hear him. He took up the strain. Another beyond heard it and joined in it, and another, and another, and many others. We made the field of battle ring with that hymn of praise to God."

Watts wrote that majestic hymn,

"Before Jehovah's awful throne,"

which was somewhat changed by Wesley.

Very tender and sweet is the 166th hymn :

“ Alas, and did my Saviour bleed,
And did my Sovereign die ? ”

At Nashville cemetery, Tennessee, a stranger was seen planting a flower on a soldier's grave. When asked, “ Was your son buried there ? ” “ No,” he replied. “ A relative ? ” After a pause, the stranger laid down a small board he held in his hand, and said, “ Well, I'll tell you. When the war broke out I lived in Illinois. I wanted to enlist, but was poor. I had a wife and seven children. I was drafted. I had no money to hire a substitute, so made up my mind that I must leave my poor, sickly family and go. After I had got all things ready to go, a young man whom I knew came to me, and said, ‘ You have a large family which your wife cannot take care of ; I will go for you.’ He did go in my place, and in battle he was wounded, and taken to Nashville hospital. Here he died. Ever since I have wished to come and see his grave. I have saved up all the spare money I could, and have come on and found my dear friend's grave.” With tears of gratitude running down his cheek, he took up the board and pressed it into the ground as a tombstone. Under the soldier's name were written the words :

“ HE DIED FOR ME.”

DR. DODDRIDGE.

The Methodist world will not forget Philip Doddridge, while in their book is found the familiar hymn of which he was the author :

“O happy day that fixed my choice.”

Doddridge was born in London, June 26th, 1702. At his birth he showed so little sign of life that he was laid aside as dead. But one of the attendants thinking she perceived some motion, took that necessary care of him on which in these tender circumstances the feeble flame of life depended, which was so near expiring as soon as it was kindled. He was the twentieth child of a mother, who was the daughter of an exiled Bohemian minister, the Rev. John Bauman. The mother had imbibed the devotional spirit of her father, who, for conscience' sake, left Prague, in Bohemia, about 1626, carrying with him nothing but one hundred pieces of gold plaited in a leathern girdle and a Bible of Luther's translation.

We have thirteen of Doddridge's hymns in our book. One of them, the 369th, is a universal favorite. I have found that hymn referred to on the death-beds of our people more than any other. How sweetly it begins :

“God of my life, through all my days.”

The hymn is a ladder; each verse a round, until at last eternity of joy is reached—eternity governed by thoughts of the love of God.

Every one is familiar with Doddridge's Sabbath hymn, the 642nd :

"Thine earthly Sabbaths, Lord, we love."

Mrs. Smith, a devoted missionary lady in the foreign field, was dying. An eye-witness says: "We were singing Doddridge's hymn on the eternal Sabbath. We feared, after two or three verses, that we wearied her, but she said "Go on," and though all were bathed in tears we sang :

" ' No more fatigue—no more distress,
Nor sin nor hell shall reach the place,
No groans to mingle with the songs
That warble from immortal tongues.' "

While singing these words she turned on me such a heavenly smile as stopped my utterance. Before we reached the end she raised both hands above her head, and gave vent to her feelings in tears of pleasure and almost in shoutings. Afterwards she said, 'I have had a glimpse of what I am going to. It was a glorious sight.' In a few minutes she was gone."

HORATIUS BONAR

has given us seven hymns—Nos. 616, 361, 766, 233, 704 and 501. Dr. Bonar was born in Edinburgh in 1808, and is now pastor of the Chalmers Memorial Church in that city, and editor of *Christian Treasury*. He is one of Israel's sweetest singers. I remember well hearing him a few years ago in his own church. Large and manly looking, long white hair, a countenance beaming with sympathy, a voice with a tear in

the tone of it, he talked to his people like a father speaking to his family. The hymns selected from his poetical works will win their way to popularity with our people. Some of them we are already familiar with. Such for instance is the 361st :

“ I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto Me and rest.”

Blessed is he who, amidst life's troubles, can say in the language of the 501st hymn :

“ Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be.”

The 704th will be sure to be sung very generally after our sacramental service :

“ Now in parting, Father, bless us,
Saviour, still Thy peace bestow.”

REV. HENRY FRANCIS LYTE.

Two hymns from this gifted minister are amongst the most cherished treasures of hymnology. He was born in Kelso, Scotland, June 1st, 1793. In 1818, three years after he had entered the ministry of the English Church, he was converted while at the death-bed of a neighboring clergyman, who had sent for him in great haste, because he was “unpardoned and unprepared to die.” As they searched the Scriptures to find out the way of salvation, they both entered into rest while perusing the Epistles of St. Paul. In 1823 he took charge of a church at Brixham, a small fishing-port, “where he made hymns for his little

ones, and hymns for his hardy fishermen, and hymns for sufferers like himself." What satisfaction in Christ, what indifference to worldly things, what eager longings after God are disclosed by his beautiful hymn :

" Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee."

Through failing health he was compelled to meditate a journey to a more genial clime. Before leaving his people, though hardly able to crawl, he made one more attempt to preach and administer the sacrament. Having bidden adieu to his flock, he retired to his chamber, fully aware that his end was near. As the evening of the day gathered its darkness, he handed to a dear relative a hymn, which an eminent author says is "almost perfect;" certainly it is immortal :

" Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens ; Lord, with me abide ! "

The Master did abide with him the few days more he spent on earth. His end is described as that of a "happy Christian poet, singing while strength lasted." When entering the valley he pointed upwards and whispered, "Peace—joy." He realized the words which close his hymn :

" Reveal Thyself before my closing eyes ;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies ;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee,
In life and death, O Lord, abide with me ! "

The Rev. Samuel Medley was a remarkable man. He was born in 1738. In 1759, he closed his earthly

career, joyfully exclaiming, "I am now a poor shattered bark, just about to gain the blissful harbor, and oh, how sweet will be the port after the storm! Dying is sweet, sweet work! Glory! glory! glory! home! home!"

Thomas Moore, the well-known Irish poet, has a hymn in our book, No. 214. To some this may be a surprise, for Moore has been usually regarded only as a writer of songs and Irish melodies. In addition, however, to his other poetry he wrote several "sacred songs." Amongst these is a beautiful paraphrase of the 60th of Isaiah and the 74th Psalm, also the well-known hymn, "Sound the loud timbrel." Each verse of the hymn we have:

"Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish,"

ends with

"Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal."

The three verses are as balm for the wounded, the suffering and the sorrowful.

The name of the Rev. Edward Perronet has been immortalized by the fact that he wrote the hymn universally known, and universally sung to the grand old tune "Coronation,"

"All hail the power of Jesus' name."

One evening, when John Wesley was preaching in London, he saw Perronet in the congregation, and without asking consent, announced that he would preach there next morning at 5 o'clock. At the appointed hour Perronet was in the pulpit. After

singing and prayer, he stated to the congregation that he had been called before them contrary to his own wish, nevertheless he would give them the best sermon that had ever been delivered. Then opening the Bible, he read our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, and, without a word of his own by way of comment, closed the service in the usual way. The effect was wonderful, and souls were born to God.

This hymn has been translated into nearly all the dialects of earth, and is sung the wide world over. No new hymn-book would be complete without it. Perronet was for a considerable time associated with the Wesleys, then with Lady Huntingdon, but his severe criticism of the Church of England in a poetical satire, called "The Mitre," so displeased her ladyship that she withdrew her favor from him. He ended his days as the minister of a dissenting congregation. He died in 1792, saying, "Glory to God in the height of His divinity! Glory to God in the depth of His humanity! Glory to God in His all-sufficiency! Into His hands I commend my spirit."

The Rev. John Mason Neale, D.D., has given us in the 312th hymn a translation of a Greek hymn which is said to be to the villagers of Scio and Mitylene, what Bishop Ken's evening hymn is to the churches of our land. Its simplicity and beauty will make it a favorite.

One of the hymns that ought and will quickly find a place in the hearts of the people is the 852nd :

"Asleep in Jesus! blessed sleep,
From which none ever wakes to weep."

It was first published in Edinburgh in 1832. The writer was Mrs. Margaret McKay, daughter of Captain Robert McKay, who, after retiring from active service, settled at Inverness. In 1820 she married Major Wm. McKay, afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel of the 68th Infantry. She is the author of "The Family at Heatherdale," and several other books in prose and verse. She will be best known, however, as the author of "Asleep in Jesus."

Michael Bruce was born in Scotland in 1746. He wrote many poems and hymns of singular beauty and pathos. He had an intimate friend, Mr. John Logan, who got possession of his manuscripts after his death, under the pretext of publishing them for the benefit of the family, but he published only a few, and in later years he palmed off the remainder as his own compositions. For years he succeeded in his treachery, but his dishonesty is now satisfactorily proved. The two hymns in our collection, Nos. 849 and 714, vindicate Bruce's right to an honored place among modern hymn-writers. The former, though a touching description of the Simeons of the Church, can scarcely be sung in a public congregation; the latter is a spirited picture of the triumphs of God's cause in the earth.

The Rev. J. Fawcett, D.D., was one of Whitefield's converts. He subsequently became a Baptist minister. We have two of his hymns, Nos. 758 and 635. The former became popular in Canada through being so often sung at the close of Y. M. C. A. and Sunday-

HYMNS AND HYMN-WRITERS.

school conventions. How grandly, yet tenderly, has been sung at such times :

“Blest be the tie that binds.”

Miss Annie Steele has given us four hymns. She was born in 1716, and was the eldest daughter of the Rev. Wm. Steele, a Baptist minister. She commenced writing poetry in very early life, over the *nom-de-plume* of “Theodosia.” She was to have been married to a Mr. Elscourt, but a few hours before the time for the marriage ceremony he went out to a river to bathe, and was drowned. It has been said that “no woman and but few men ever wrote so many hymns that have been so generally accepted in the Church as Miss Steele.”

There are three hymns from the Rev. F. W. Faber, who was born in 1815 ; became a Church of England minister, but, in 1846, disavowed his Protestantism, and entered the Church of Rome. Many of his hymns possess great beauty. Of these, the three in our book are choice specimens.

The Christian Church will never let die the name of Charlotte Elliott, who gives us three hymns—amongst them,

“Just as I am, without one plea.”

She was born in 1789.

A poor little boy came to a New York City missionary, and holding out a piece of worn-out dirty paper, said, “Please, sir, father sent me to get a clean bit of paper like that.” On it was printed the hymn,

"Just as I am," etc. "Why do you want a clean paper?" "Well, sir, we found this in sister's pocket after she died, and she used to sing it all the time she was sick, and she loved it so much that father wanted to get a clean one, and put it in a frame to hang it up. Please, sir, won't you give us a clean one." Perhaps this hymn has been blessed to the salvation of as many souls as any other that was ever penned. Miss Elliott died in 1871.

John Cennick, author of the 761st hymn,

"Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone,"

and the 135th,

"Thou great redeeming, dying Lamb,"

was born in 1717. For a time he preached amongst the Wesleyans, then joined himself to Whitefield, and ended his days as a dissenting minister. From the frequent use of such terms as "the babe that lay in swaddling clothes," while in Ireland the peasants nicknamed him "Swaddler," or "Swaddling John," and for many years the Methodists there were known as the "Swaddlers."

That sweet, melting melody,

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend,"

is set down in the index as belonging to Allen and Shirley. The Rev. James Allen was born in Gayle, Yorkshire, in 1734. He was editor and principal contributor to several hymn-books. He accompanied the Wesleys to Georgia, and on his return joined the Moravian brethren.

The Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley was born in 1725, and was descended from a family of the nobility. He became a minister of the Established Church. He was a friend of the Wesleys and the brother-in-law of Lady Huntingdon. The familiar line, "Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing," is from his fertile pen.

Hymn 838,

"I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,"

is from the pen of Mrs. Jemima Luke. She was born in London in 1813. At the age of thirteen she became a popular contributor to the "Infant's Magazine." Her father, Thomas Thompson, was a philanthropist, and took a great interest in the education of poor children. Mrs. Luke became much attached to a little village school near her father's residence, and wished to write a little song for it that would awaken an interest in religion, and be impressed on the children's minds. Christ's present sympathy for the little ones was the leading thought in her mind, and while riding in a stage-coach she composed the hymn which has been embodied in our book.

Mary Lundie Duncan gives us Nos. 627 and 831.

It was in the spring of 1814, in the manse of Kelso, that this gifted lady first saw the light. She married the Rev. Wallace W. Duncan, and died at an early age. To her we are indebted for the "Child's Evening Prayer," which speedily became the last lispsings of the kneeling little one at the mother's knee, or by the side of the little cot:

"Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me."

Thomas Olivers was born in 1725. He grew up to be a blasphemer, and a ringleader in everything that was notoriously profane. He was converted to God through hearing George Whitefield preach from the words, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" and soon after joined the Methodist society. Falling heir to some property, he proved the reality of his conversion by going round to every one whom he owed and paying his debts, though to clear himself fully he had to sell his horse, saddle and bridle, which he had procured in order to go through the country as an evangelist. Wesley desired him to go to Cornwall and preach the Gospel there. He footed it as far as Tiverton, in Devon, where a friend asked him why he had not a horse. The reason was easily given. "Go and buy one," it was said, "and it shall be paid for." "A few days after," he writes, "I went with a farmer into his field. In a few minutes a colt two and a half years old came to me and put his nose on my shoulder. I asked the farmer what he would take for him. He said five pounds. We struck a bargain at once, and in a few days I mounted my horse, and have kept him to this day, which is about twenty-five years. On him I have travelled not less than 100,000 miles in preaching the Gospel. I parted with one horse rather than bring a reproach on the Gospel, and as a reward God provided me with another such as, in many respects, none of my brethren could ever boast of." Olivers now fairly entered on his life-work. Such was his perseverance, that amidst all the vicissitudes and inconveniences of these early days, he became thoroughly

versed in theology, and a very excellent Greek and Hebrew scholar. He is the author of the hymn, "The God of Abraham praise," divided into three parts in our book. James Montgomery says of this hymn, "There is not in our language a lyric of more majestic style, more elevated thought, or more glorious imagery. Its structure is, indeed, unattractive, and on account of the short lines uncouth, but, like a stately pile of architecture, severe and simple in design, it strikes less on the first view than after deliberate examination. The man who wrote this hymn must have had the finest ear imaginable, for on account of the peculiarity of the measure, none but a person of equal musical and poetic taste could have produced the harmony perceptible in the verse." Richard Watson died repeating portions of this hymn, so did the wife of the saintly Carvosso and many others. Again and again have these words cheered God's people while going down into the valley:

"I shall behold His face,
I shall His power adore,
And sing the wonders of His grace
For evermore."

Sir Richard Hill, one of Wesley's bitterest opponents, tried to throw contempt on Olivers, calling him "One Thomas Olivers, *alias* Olivers, a cobbler," referring to his occupation before entering the ministry. This drew from John Fletcher a testimony to the shoemaker's ability and character. "This author was twenty-five years ago a mechanic, and like 'one'

Peter, 'alias' Simon, a fisherman, and like 'one' Saul, 'alias' Paul, a tent-maker, has had the honor of being promoted to the dignity of a preacher of the Gospel; and his talents as a writer, a logician, a poet, and a composer of sacred music are known to those who have looked into his publications." Olivers outlived Wesley. He died suddenly in London in 1799, and his remains found rest in Wesley's own tomb.

Mrs. Sarah Flower Adams has won for herself everlasting remembrance by writing

"Nearer, my God, to Thee."

She was the daughter of Benjamin Flower, editor of the Cambridge *Intelligencer*, and the wife of Wm. B. Adams, an eminent engineer, who contributed to some of the principal newspapers and reviews. She was born February 22, 1805. Her mother was a lady of talent, so also was her eldest sister Eliza, who was also an authoress. She was noted in early life for high literary taste and deep, earnest religious life. She contributed prose and poetry to several periodicals. In 1845 she wrote a catechism for children called "The Flock at the Fountain," which is Unitarian in sentiment. She died August 13, 1849, eight years after the publication of "Nearer, my God, to Thee," and was buried in Essex, England. This popular hymn is not faultless as a literary production, nor is it the highest style of a Christian hymn, as the name of Jesus is not in it. But as a poetical version of Jacob's dream at Bethel, and as the devout aspiration of a soul for God, it is worthy of a place in our hymn-book.

The poet Whittier thus commemorates a visit made to him by two young ladies, sisters :

“ Years since, (but names to me before)
Two sisters sought at eve my door,
Two-song birds, wandering from their nest,
A gray old farm house in the west.
What could I other than I did ?
Could I a singing bird forbid ?
Deny the wild stirred leaf ? Rebuke
The music of the forest brook ? ”

The wind that stirred the nest of these song-birds was some unpropitious gale that made home uncomfortable after the death of a mother. So with much faith and little money, the sisters bade adieu to the home of their childhood and sought to make one for themselves in the city of New York. They rented two or three rooms, and busied hands and pen to make a living. Success crowned their efforts and enabled them to purchase a home on Twentieth Street, from which in after years they ascended to their home above. The sisters bore the names of Phœbe and Alice Carey. Alice is the writer of our 844th hymn :

“ Earth, with its dark and dreadful ills,
Recedes and fades away.”

and Phœbe is the author of that universally loved song :

“ One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er,
I am nearer home to-day
Than I ever have been before.”

Two Americans were in a gambling saloon in China, playing cards. While the elder one was shuffling the cards the younger began to hum "One sweetly solemn thought." The other threw down the cards, and said: "Harry, where did you learn that?" "At Sunday-school." "Come," said the elder one, "Come, here's what I have won from you. As for me, as God sees me, I have played my last game and drunk my last bottle. I have misled you, and I'm sorry for it. Give me your hand, my boy, and say that for old America's sake, if for no other, you, too, will quit this infernal business." Both these gamblers were permanently reclaimed by that hymn. Miss Carey was much charmed by this incident. Writing to a friend, she said: "I enclose the hymn and the story for you. You will feel a peculiar interest in the verses when you know they were written eighteen years ago (1852) in your house. I composed them in the little back third-story bedroom one Sunday morning after coming from church, and it makes me happy to think that any word I could say has done a little good in the world."

Another American hymn, a universal favorite, is No. 400:

"My faith looks up to Thee."

The author is the Rev. Ray Palmer, D.D., an eminent Congregational minister, now living, I think, in Newark, N.J. It will be found serviceable in revival meetings, its language being peculiarly fitted to put in the lips of the anxious. Dr. Palmer has two other

hymns in our book, both of which will commend themselves to our people for their devotional spirit, elevated sentiment and smooth rhythm.

Bishop Heber is a name loved by the whole of Christendom. He was born in 1783, at Malpas, England. Fifty-nine of his hymns have been published; six of these are in our book, but the crown of them all is the missionary hymn.

The two hymns, Nos. 498 and 726, are from the pen of Rev. Wm. Williams, a celebrated Welsh poet, who was born in Carmarthenshire, Wales, in 1717. He commenced the study of medicine, but after hearing a sermon by Howell Harris, he was led to Christ, and turned his thoughts towards the ministry. He was ordained deacon in the English Church in his twenty-third year, but being encouraged by Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon to become an itinerant minister, he united with the Calvinistic Methodists. He labored most incessantly for half a century, travelling on an average 2,230 miles a year for forty-three years, when there were no railroads and but few stage-coaches. He died in 1791, aged seventy-four years.

The following anecdote, vouched for by a reliable source, illustrates the guidance of the Great Jehovah, of which Williams so beautifully sings: During the American war a prisoner in Andersonville managed one night to surmount his prison and get beyond the picket-line, but it was so dark that he could not tell which was north or south. He was afraid to move, for fear of going still farther south into the ranks of the enemy. He had a compass with him, but it was

useless without a light. A candle, or even a match, would have been of priceless value to him in his time of need, for his very life seemed to hang upon the needed light. In his extremity a little fire-fly wended its way to his relief. He eagerly and gladly seized it, and its wings gave out light enough to let him see the finger on his compass, and thus his feet were directed and he was led at length to his home in safety.

The Rev. John Keble gives us two hymns, one of them,

“Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,”

known and sung, especially at family worship, the wide world over.

Wherever there are Christian hearts to praise God, Bishop Ken's two hymns are known :

“Awake, my soul, and with the sun,”

and

“Glory to Thee, my God, this night.”

Ken was born in Berkhamstead, England, in 1637. He was appointed Chaplain to the Prince of Orange in 1669 ; to Charles the Second in 1684, and to James the Second in 1685. When the king ordered him to read the celebrated “Declaration of Indulgence” he refused, and was imprisoned in the Tower.

Robert Robinson is the author of a hymn almost as well known as “Rock of Ages.” I mean :

“Come, Thou fount of every blessing.”

Robinson embraced Socinian views, and these robbed him of his religious joys. Travelling one day by

coach, a lady who had been reading his hymn, "Come, Thou fount," etc., asked him if he knew it. He tried to parry her questions, until at length, bursting into a flood of tears, he exclaimed, "Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who composed that hymn many years ago, and I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I had then."

Hymns 619, 620 and 621 are worthy of much thought and study. Dr. Schaff says, "This glowing description of the celestial country is the sweetest of all the New Jerusalem hymns of heavenly home-sickness which have taken their inspiration from the last two chapters of Revelations. It was composed about 1125 by Bernard, a monk, of Cluny, in France, contemporary with the more illustrious St. Bernard of Clair Vaux." To appreciate it it should be read right through, and one doing so will be lifted nearer heaven by the exercise.

Two beautiful hymns, Nos. 110 and 127, were composed seven hundred years ago, by Bernard, the celebrated Abbot of Clair Vaux. He was born in Burgundy, in 1091, and was consecrated to God from the first, by Aletta, his mother. Her death-chamber was his spiritual birth-place. She died responding to a chant. He was selected with twelve others to build a monastery, which they accomplished, in a pathless forest haunted by robbers. There they toiled with songs of praise, till at length it became Clair Vaux, "the bright valley." Luther held Bernard in high esteem, and said he was the best monk that ever lived. He has been designated the *honeyed* teacher,

and his writings a *stream from Paradise*. He died in 1163, being sixty-two years of age.

It was a fitting thing that our Canadian Methodism should be represented in our new hymn-book. This has been done by inserting two hymns from the pen of the Rev. Edward Hartley Dewart, D.D., editor of the *Christian Guardian*. Dr. Dewart has vindicated his claim to the possession of the poet's genius. In the "Songs of Life," published by him some years ago, there are some pieces that take a very high rank for their apt imagery, lofty sentiment, and easy, smooth verse. The hymns Nos. 925 and 927—the one on Christian education, the other a prayer for teachers and students—meet a want, specially felt when using the old book. There was really only one hymn in the old book that was at all appropriate for an educational meeting. These hymns combine good connected thought with a deeply reverent spirit and a careful comprehension of the needs of both teachers and pupils. I am glad that these Canadian hymns are inserted in a book that will live through the centuries. I fancy I could name other Canadian Methodist poets also, from whose manuscripts a good selection might have been made.

Hymn 607, commencing:

"Jerusalem, my happy home,
When shall I come to thee?"

has an interesting history. The prison cells of the old Tower in London are covered with the marks and memorials of many a hapless victim of tryanny

and persecution. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, a prisoner was shut up in one of those cells, who, in his hours of imprisonment, composed the hymn in twenty-six verses, a manuscript copy of which is now in the British Museum. It is entitled, "A song, by F. B. P., to the tune of 'Diana.'" The name of the prisoner is lost in oblivion. The winged words of the hymn have long since found their way into thousands of Christian hearts, both in Europe and America. It was the favorite refrain of the communion martyrs and Covenanters, who sang it in the glens and on the mountains of Scotland. The index of our book attributes it to David Dickson, of Edinburgh, but he only altered the original and added thirty-six verses of his own. About the beginning of this century an unknown author made a variation of the hymn in six verses, and this is the one found in our book. A young Scotchman was visited on his death-bed by a minister, but all the good man's efforts to reach his heart were vain. At last he turned away, and, scarcely knowing why, hummed "Jerusalem, my happy home," but that was enough, a tender chord was touched. "My mother used to sing that hymn," he said, and the way was open for spiritual counsel and instruction.

The name of Rev. W. M. Punshon, D.D., needs no introduction to Canadian Methodists, either as a preacher or a poet. They will all welcome hymns Nos. 438 and 645, from his facile and eloquent pen.

The 438th,

"Listen, the Master beseecheth,"

was born on Canadian soil. At a missionary meeting in Montreal, Dr. Punshon heard Philip Phillips sing, "Your Mission." He wrote this hymn as a companion to that, and in a courteous note, presenting it to Mr. Phillips, he suggested that Mr. Phillips might set it to an appropriate tune. This the "Singing Pilgrim" has done.

The 645th is from "Sabbath Chimes," a collection of pieces written by Dr. Punshon some years ago, during a year's enforced rest from the work of the ministry on account of illness.

Three hymns, 245, 894, 691, are from the pen of a Wesleyan minister in England, whose name is the synonym of all that is tender and enduring, Rev. W. M. Bunting, son of the celebrated Dr. Bunting.

Of course, we have in our book the world-wide known

"Rock of Ages,"

by Toplady.

William Cowper contributes to our book four hymns. Of these the two most universally known and sung are,

"God moves in a mysterious way,"

and

"There is a fountain filled with blood."

When under the influence of the fits of mental derangement to which he was subject, he meditated drowning himself in the River Ouse, some two or three miles from his residence at Olney. He called for a post-chaise and ordered the driver to take him to the spot. Though the driver well knew the

place, yet in some unaccountable way the man lost his way and failed to reach the place. The snare was thus broken, and Cowper returned to his home, sat down and wrote that fine hymn, "God moves in a mysterious way."

The hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood," was written for the little Olney prayer-meeting. Little did Cowper imagine when he first heard John Newton announce, and this small praying band unite in singing, "There is a fountain," etc., that there was starting a song that would afterwards be caught up by untold millions, and that a century later, when his

"Poor, lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave,"

would still be repeated from the rising to the setting of the sun, and continue to echo round the globe

"Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more."

Frances Ridley Havergal furnishes us with ten hymns.

The life of this gifted lady has been written by her sister, who lays upon the tomb of one of the most devoted women of the age a wreath of fragrant white flowers. The book records a strong mental and spiritual life; a marvellous refinement of the æsthetic powers, and a devotion to the divine service as simple-hearted as complete. To the subject of it, Christ was indeed "All and in all." Christians have here a book which they may wisely put into the hands of their friends, when they are feeling their way to

trust in the Redeemer and religious decision; while the most experienced Christian will find in it much to stimulate faith, and lead to a fuller consecration to God. The life will make the poems and hymns of this sweet singer doubly interesting to devout hearts.

But I must close. In parting with the sweet companionship of the gifted sons and daughters of song, we part with cherished friends. We have shared alike in their ecstatic raptures and their sorrowing refrains; their beautiful lessons of wisdom and their exulting prophecies. Many-hued have been their bright creations, and many-voiced their melodious utterances; but the burden of their song is interpenetrated by one great theme—the cross of Calvary and the spiritual warfare which it inspires in every true human soul. This great central fact in our Christian faith has been throughout the procession of the centuries, the grand altar-shrine around which the priesthood of sacred song have ever rendered the homage of their votive offerings. As we have seen, in the earliest ages the Hebrews chanted in solemn numbers their anthems of adoration by the inspired lips of their prophet-bards; and in the Apostolic Church the same sublime chorus was taken up in the language of the polished Greek; while it was again re-echoed in the majestic cadences of the Latin; then found heroic utterance in the German, and lastly, in the rich combinations of our own vernacular. Nor will the theme, so august and sublime, ever become trite or lose aught of its soul-quickenning energy, either with past or present, so long as time shall last

or heaven endure; for never shall it be forgotten that among the royalties and beatitudes of that world of light and life, evermore the voice of holy psalm and glad hosannah thrills the happy spirits of its redeemed and rejoicing multitudes with an ecstasy of bliss altogether unknown to the denizens of this shadowy, sin-smitten world of ours. Then let memory be true to her trust, and among the choicest of her spoils, as a celestial benison will be the precious legacy thus bequeathed to us by the gifted and the good. Like some saintly evangel will these sweet lyrics oft-times prove their potency by urging our dull souls, full panoplied for the warfare, with sandal shoon and pilgrim staff, onward and upward in the divine life, till leaving the discordant accompaniments of earth all forgotten, we attain to where

“No groans shall mingle with the songs
That warble from immortal tongues.”

